

RESURRECTING THE RURAL CHURCH

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## ABSTRACT

The concept for this thesis was born out of the author's desire to show the modalities used to implement change over time and the turnaround strategies used for renewal. Chapter one reviews the history of Emley's Hill United Methodist Church (United Methodist Church) from its founding six years after the founding of Methodism in America in 1784 through the first two hundred years, which were most notably marked by a constant cycle of part-time pastors. In 1988 the author was appointed as the first full-time pastor in the church's history. Among the problems facing the new pastor were an entrenched leadership that operated autonomously and a land-locked building with no parking. The average member age was sixty-seven and the principle occupations were farming and retirement. The first chapter examines the process that brought it to the point of renewal. Chapter two lays out the polity framework of the United Methodist Church within which the author had to operate. In some instances polity was a key factor in maintaining momentum; in others it was a hindrance. The author shows how biblical and theological principles have guided the work, with special consideration given to the United Methodist Book of Discipline, which created the operational framework. Chapter three cites pertinent readings that impacted the author's understanding of the setting and the problems faced. Chapter four presents the project design, describing the work used in gathering the data necessary for renewal. Our data gathering was based on Earl D.

Dykema's *Focus Your Ministry*. Chapter five explains how the data gathered were implemented, shows how ministry plans were developed, and presents conclusions and summaries.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In the process of changing the discipling dynamics of Emley's Hill United Methodist Church (United Methodist Church), which was steeped in over 200 years of history that pushed it in an altogether different direction, the author came across *Leading Turnaround Churches*, by Gene Wood, who says, "God often utilizes average people with an unusual determination in an extraordinary manner."<sup>1</sup> He drove the point home with the following scripture,<sup>2</sup>

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

The only confidence the author had in bringing about change was a profound sense of confidence in God. God equips each person for the task to which He calls that person; therefore each person is adequate for the task to which he or she is called. The pattern of ministry was that change would take place and effective ministry would follow

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<sup>1</sup> Gene Wood, *Leading Turnaround Churches* (St. Charles: Church Smart Resources, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 1:26-29, *Holy Bible NIV* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995).

for a season, only to fall back into previous patterns. This homeostasis<sup>3</sup> (a system's natural tendency to maintain the status quo) was, in this case, not a positive thing. To understand fully the dynamics that established Emley's Hill United Methodist Church patterns for ministry, one must start from the beginning.

Emley's Hill Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1790, six years after the birth of Methodism in America. In 1760, Phillip Embury and Robert Strawbridge came to America from Ireland as local preachers, empowered by Methodism's founder to preach the gospel and form Methodist "societies." Societies were the forerunners of what we now call "small group ministry." The first such society was established in 1766 in New York City. In 1768, a meetinghouse was established and dedicated. Captain Thomas Webb, who was stationed with the British in New York City, was helpful in establishing this first society and subsequently petitioned John Wesley to send more preachers to America. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came in 1768, and Richard Wright and Francis Asbury came in 1771. These men preached throughout the colonies and had remarkable success. Of all, Francis Asbury is most notable. He preached in all the colonies and kept a journal of all that he did. He records in his journal that he preached in Crosswicks, Allentown, and Cranbury, New Jersey, all on the same day. It was, no doubt, his preaching that inspired the people from the Emley's Hill area to approach the Emley family and secure a parcel of land on which to build a church. In 1790, Emley's Hill Methodist Episcopal Church was born.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor* (The Alban Institute, Inc., 1993), 54.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Horace M. Frantz, *A History of the Emley's Hill United Methodist Church*, 1979, unpublished document, Documents of the Emley's Hill United Methodist Church, New Jersey.

In 1790, Samuel Emley gave the trustees, elected from within the group that was meeting in the area as Methodists, one acre of land on Emley's Hill to build a church. This was accomplished just six years after the founding of Methodism in America in 1784. At the time there were 2,363 full members in all of Methodism in America.<sup>5</sup>

Church documents show that Francis Asbury preached at Emley's Hill in September of 1795 and May of 1802. In 1807, the church burned to the ground and was rebuilt in the same year. There are few church records for those early years, but we do know the names of all pastors who were appointed since 1815. Records show that one hundred fifty-one pastors served Emley's Hill from 1815 to 2007. The author is the first full-time pastor. Pastors came and went almost yearly. This pattern certainly did not allow enough time for any one pastor to set down roots or establish an identity in the community. As a result, there has always been a sense of autonomy within the membership that has kept them at arm's length from the Annual Conference and a sense of entitlement to run things as they pleased, regardless of what Church Discipline stated. It was into this atmosphere that the author was appointed pastor in 1988.

Pastoral employment is contracted on a yearly basis and the local bishop appoints pastors in the Methodist system for one year at a time. Appointments are then renewed or changed each year thereafter. This appointment was supposed to be for one year, after which the pastor is to move on to a full-time church. Emley's Hill was part of a two-point charge (two churches yoked together by geographic proximity and one pastor). The pastor's responsibility was Sunday preaching, weddings, and funerals if possible. The Clarksburg Methodist Church was the other half of this charge and was located

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 3.

approximately fifteen miles from Emley's Hill in the adjacent town. Clarksburg had a member list of eighty with fourteen in regular attendance. Emley's Hill had a much larger membership roll, at one hundred twenty with an average attendance of twenty. Both churches had approximately twenty to thirty thousand dollars each in savings and were debt free. At both churches, the average age of members was sixty-seven. This put them in the generation that was born during prohibition, which also meant that they went through the Great Depression and World War II. The primary occupations were farming and retirement. Most of the families in both churches had roots in the area that went back over two hundred years. Reading road signs in the area was like reading a list of church members. People were land rich but not cash rich. They were neither poor nor wealthy.

The author arrived in 1988. Only thirty-six years old, he was received as a grandson and not as a pastor. He was, nevertheless, happy to be there and excited at the prospects for the future.

In the first year of ministry, both churches welcomed the author and his wife with open arms and hearts. They were living in New Brunswick, New Jersey, which was thirty miles to the north, so members had contact with him only on Sundays. When the pastor asked about the need for administrative meetings, he was told they were not needed because everything was taken care of with a few simple phone calls, if indeed anything was needed. No matter how much the pastor thought the meeting was needed, it was always rejected as unnecessary by the old guard.

During the author's final year in seminary a very wise professor shared an important dictum for ministry, which was, "pay attention to your community." During the first few years as pastor, the author tried to visit everyone in their homes and at their

workplaces if possible. Most of the workplaces were farm settings so visiting was not a problem, and the members welcomed him to their homes. Some much needed insight was garnered by hearing how these folks really thought and what their hopes were for the future of the church. To a person, they believed that it was time to institute some change in order to attract young people to worship services. To accomplish this, the author came up with the idea to merge the Clarksburg and Emley's Hill churches and to meet at Emley's Hill. He made the suggestion to the district superintendent, who passed the suggestion on to the bishop and the cabinet. The cabinet responded with a list of requirements that they wanted fulfilled before they would allow the church members to vote on the merger. A demographic study of the area and research to determine the potential for growth in the area were requested. With some effort, this was accomplished, and the findings were presented to the cabinet. It was understood by the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry that a merger would require a full-time appointment. In July 1989, the author, while still in seminary and in the process of ordination, was appointed full time to both churches. The minimum salary and a small housing allowance were provided, as neither church had a parsonage. After commuting from New Brunswick for nine months the author and his wife found in the area a house that they were able to purchase. Closing and moving took place in March of 1990. Everything seemed to be in place for great things to happen.

It quickly became apparent that any change was problematic. Although the merger had been voted on and was approved unanimously, there were still some hurt feelings among the Clarksburg people, who had to give up their church. Everyone came

to Emley's Hill, but some came reluctantly. One could sense the tension with some parishioners on Sunday mornings, but feelings were kept beneath the surface.

With the completion of the merger, the author was able to spend quality time in outreach and program creation. Following the precept of paying attention to the community, time was spent with parishioners at their homes and at their workplaces. The author began to meet new people in the surrounding communities, focusing on younger people, who would be needed if the church were to survive into the future.

At one of the first board meetings, the issue of outreach was discussed. It was made clear that outreach would be the pastor's job. The older people were not interested in outreach or sharing their faith with outsiders. They were willing to provide opportunities at the church for outside people to attend but only to evaluate their potential for membership. They were afraid of change and because they had never been discipled, they had no real idea of how to reach out to people. They had been faithful church attendees all their lives and were responding to basic church program outreach with hostility. This raised some questions about their level of Christian maturity. All the years of part-time student pastors had left them to fend for themselves spiritually. The church was a place they could gather and have fellowship, much like the local grange hall and with about the same effect. Can you expect much from people who are spiritually immature? The answer to that question is yes, if one is willing to put in place the necessary time and structure that will encourage spiritual growth and the patience to adjust to their timetable.

The logical first step is to invite people to the church. The easiest and least frightening event at which to welcome the invitees was the monthly covered dish suppers.

Two women in the church who had been running the suppers for over thirty years had the last word about the suppers. The women were open to the suggestion of inviting the new folks to participate and thus sent personal invitations to all recent contacts. At the suggestion of some members who suggested that entertainment be hired, a bluegrass band was brought in to play in the sanctuary after the supper. The normal attendance at the covered dish suppers were twenty to thirty people. About one hundred and fifty new people showed up. There was a problem with the regulars when the first fifty newcomers showed up, but when the rest of the newcomers showed, the pastor was summoned to the kitchen to see the women in charge. It should be pointed out that all of the people who attended brought a covered dish to the supper. There was more than enough food. Nevertheless, the regulars communicated to the pastor that the night had been ruined and if this ever happened again they would make the pastor's life a living hell. The pastor made no response and the evening ended without incident. All the new folks had a great time and many began coming to church. This pattern continued throughout the year as the church steadily grew. The older folks were, however, very unhappy and did not mind telling the younger ones about their displeasure.

Despite the negative comments, the church continued to grow until we were seeing regular worship attendance of over one hundred eighty-five in a church that seated one hundred twenty. Younger, new members were moved into leadership positions and a small group was formed for visioning for the future. The group determined that more space was needed to accommodate the growing number of people, and so committees were established, vision and mission statements were written, and a comprehensive plan

for the future was developed. It was at this point that the church had to raise the money to build. That is when the real problems began.

Raising money through pledges seemed like a very easy next step for a young pastor, considering the numerical and financial growth Emley's Hill had experienced over the previous few years. It was not to be. Preaching on stewardship and God's economy in the Kingdom was constantly challenged. It was not the pastor's "job" to talk about money. Constant talk of money (once a year) would drive people away. The church brought in a fund raising group from the denomination. The person assigned to us was very good at his job and helped people understand the need to give to this worthy Kingdom cause. It was at this time that some people who were not supporters of this move toward growth saw an opportunity to develop resistance to the idea. They were very inventive and proactive in their quest to see the project fail. They visited every member in their homes and suggested ways to overcome this plan for growth. They convinced some that growth meant debt and debt was bad. The memory of the depression was still very powerful.

The plan was to build adjacent to the existing church a four-thousand-square-foot addition, which would provide space for Sunday school and offices. The old guard was convinced it was not needed. After all, the church did not even have a telephone in the building. It had managed without electricity until twenty years earlier. Besides, there were only ten children in our Sunday school program, so why build? The answer, of course, was to fulfill God's plan for our church and community. In the final analysis, fewer than ten percent of the people supported the addition, but it was enough to build it and pay off the mortgage in five years. It was during those five years that the disgruntled



group set about causing discord through rumor and secret meetings that finally convinced most of the younger folks that church was not worth attending. Attendance dwindled until we were back to our original twenty in attendance. God was not done.

Over the years, church leaders developed a dynamic vacation Bible school (VBS) program that was growing every year. By 1997, sixty to seventy children were attending for one week and were provided with activities, Bible lessons, entertainment, crafts, hot lunches, and gifts at no charge. The church was able to do this through fund raisers throughout the year and with the generous support of several wealthy families who had stayed despite efforts by the detractors to convince them otherwise.

Once again, the concept of paying attention to your community was employed. The families of the VBS children were visited at their homes and at their workplaces. They were impressed that such an interest was taken in them and began attending church. Within three years, Emley's Hill was back up to one hundred eighty in attendance. The VBS program grew to the point that people had to register their children before Easter in order for them to participate. We were forced to limit VBS to the first one hundred and fifty children registered. We were "busting at the seams and cash flush," a very good feeling after what seemed to be a previous defeat. The older folks began to step down from leadership and new folks were replacing them. The church was ready, once again, for change.

Having faced this situation once before, the author was aware that help in understanding how best to move forward and avoid the mistakes of the past was needed. Spiritual immaturity was still prevalent in the church.

The first step was to devise a plan to help people grow in their faith in an organized way that would augment Sunday worship.

The pastor scheduled a retreat for the leadership of the church and all attended. At this retreat, it was decided to develop a Congregational Plan (systems analysis).<sup>6</sup> The immediate part of the plan was to establish home groups for the purpose of fellowship and Bible study. The congregation was divided geographically. Within the geographic areas that were established, a church member who lived in that area was asked to host a weekly study group. The next step was to give a spiritual gifts analysis test (see Appendix B<sup>7</sup>) to everyone in the church to determine who would be best gifted to lead the home groups. It was also determined that people who had the gift of hospitality would be asked to open their homes to the groups. The goal was to have the congregational plan in place for review and action within twelve months.

The model that we put in place consisted of five task forces. They were:

1. Outreach Ministries task force
2. Congregational Ministries task force
3. Vision task force
4. Facility and Finances task force
5. Member Involvement and Leadership task force

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<sup>6</sup> Earl D. Dykema, *Focus Your Ministry* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1999), 41. To secure the information we needed for our system analysis, we used the five task forces suggested by the author.

<sup>7</sup> “New Ideas in Church Vitality and Leadership,” in *Net Results* (February 1997).

Each of these task forces was given a special mandate to gather the information pertinent to their group and return the findings according to the directions given to each of the groups. When all the groups had finished, the information was culled and a final report was presented to the church.

Without going into the details of each group's report (which will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters), the final analysis was that the church had to begin looking immediately for a new facility and additional staff was needed to bring about change in a timely fashion. The report results prompted the formation of two new committees: one whose job it was to find available land within a ten-mile radius, and one whose job it was to determine how we would raise the money to finance the vision.

In the insightful words of someone, "pioneers become settlers real quick" when they find their comfort zone. In the year that this process took, some of the task force members began to feel intimidated by the prospect of growing, to the point that they might lose the power base they had established. These feelings manifested themselves in the guise of concern for the history of the building and how long-standing members would feel if we moved, among other things. Once again, the status quo was rearing its ugly head.

Additional staff were needed and it was believed that such an addition would more effectively help the church meet its ministry goals. It was also believed that new staff might help deflect some of the resentment that was welling up. With this in mind, the church set out to hire a full-time assistant pastor and a part-time worship leader. The first task was to find a worship leader.

While the church was in the process of buying a piano for the sanctuary, we were reacquainted with a young man named Tom (fictitious name), who had been the part-time organist at Emley's Hill during his senior year in high school when the author was first appointed to the church. Tom was an extremely talented individual who had gone on to college, where he had majored in piano composition and performance. He was asked if he might be interested in the position and he quickly accepted. Because the church had some history with Tom, the leadership asked him to write his own employment agreement using the guidelines we supplied. He presented the church with a four-year plan that would eventually bring him to full-time status. After meeting with him and making some minor adjustments, the committee unanimously voted Tom in as our new worship director. He began working twenty hours a week, with fifteen hours required at the church. No one realized just what an impact this young man was to have on our church. Attendance began to rise to the point that we had to add a second service. There was standing room only for the main service and we would regularly crowd almost two hundred people into a church that seated one hundred twenty. One of the conditions of employment was that Tom would be allowed to work outside the church only at his piano sales job and not at any other church. He agreed and it was left at that. With so many great things happening, some ominous warning signs were missed early on.

About this time, the church also hired an assistant pastor who had recently retired and whom the author had known for over twenty years. It was believed that Bob (fictitious name) would be a great match for the church and the congregation. He was allowed to write his own employment agreement and after reviewing it, the church agreed to hire him as our new full-time assistant pastor. As soon as Pastor Bob was hired,

problems began. Families left the church because they did not agree with the leadership that Pastor Bob was needed. Others were not happy but agreed to stay on to see how he would work out. They were assured that if they just gave Pastor Bob a chance they would quickly come to see his worth.

It was at this time that we were at our ministry peak. People were flocking to the church, filling the building and the coffers. Our task forces had found an acceptable parcel of land on a major road and had secured the services of an architect. Plans were drawn and the vision was coming together. Worship was transformative due in large measure to the praise and worship team and the excellent job Tom was doing. God was in everything we did. Nothing could keep Emley's Hill from fulfilling its vision for the future.

That year, at the annual denominational meeting that was attended by two thousand pastors and laypeople, the bishop awarded the Denman Prize for Evangelism to the author. The Denman Prize for Evangelism is awarded each year to one pastor and one layperson who best exemplify the qualities of leadership that result in significant changes within a given congregation. Numerical growth is not the primary factor in deciding who qualifies for the award but rather what one has done to secure growth over a period of time and how one overcomes obstacles to growth. In the case of Emley's Hill, the time period was approximately five years, during which time the pastor and the church leadership introduced the process of developing a congregational plan utilizing *Focus Your Ministry*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

This publication was the framework used to answer the six strategic questions necessary for renewal:

1. Where are we now? (History and Context)
2. Who are we as a church? (Core Ministry Values)
3. Why do we exist? (Purpose/Mission)
4. Whom is God calling us to serve? (People)
5. Where does God want us to be? (Vision)
6. What is our plan to accomplish our vision? (Goals and Plans)<sup>9</sup>

In the next chapter, the author shows how Emley's Hill United Methodist Church used this work to answer the questions posed.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of renewal is at the heart of the Christian message. Our life in Christ and in His church is one of constant renewal and reflection as we seek to learn from our past and jettison those things that hold us back from transformation and renewal. At the center of all renewal is the Holy Spirit at work within the hearts and minds of His people on earth to reach out and save the lost. The purpose of the church and its members as defined by Jesus is to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”<sup>10</sup>

This Great Commission is the standard by which a church either lives or dies. A church has life if it indeed is obeying the Great Commission or is dying if it is not. What, in fact, differentiates a church from other organizations is its mandate to adhere to this biblical command. Churches that fail in this regard are not churches at all but rather buildings filled with people following agendas established by their own perceived needs seeking to meet those needs by establishing their own sets of rules and regulations. The programs created to maintain this status quo establish their purpose for existing.

Within the context of the United Methodist Church, the Discipline of the church reads:

The United Methodist church believes today, as Methodism has from the first, that the only infallible proof of a true church of Christ is its ability to seek and

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<sup>10</sup> Matt. 28:19-20 (NASB).

save the lost, to disseminate the Pentecostal spirit and life, to spread scriptural holiness, and to transform all peoples and nations through the Gospel of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

John Wesley understood the necessity of transformation as renewal of the lost when he admonished young preachers to what their true priorities should be:

It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

The preamble to the Constitution of the United Methodist Church reads in part:

The church is a community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redeemed and redeeming fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the church seeks to provide for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Implicit in the above paragraph is the transformation of new believers in an organized manner in which the participant takes on the nature of Christ through the process of discipling. This is the primary action in which Wesley admonished his preachers to

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<sup>11</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1988* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1988), 10.

<sup>12</sup> Robert E. Colman, *Nothing To Do But To Save Souls* (Wilmore: Wesley Heritage Press, 1990), 16.

<sup>13</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1996), 21.



4. Whom is God calling us to serve? (People)
5. Where does God want us to be? (Vision)
6. What is our plan to accomplish our vision? (Goals and Plans)

To answer these questions, *Focus Your Ministry* called for the formation of five task forces. Each task force was given the responsibility to focus on one specific area of ministry. Each task force was asked to gather data to answer the two strategic questions as it applied to their specific task.

#### Facility and finances Task Force

This task force was charged with assessing the congregation's financial stewardship and the use of the property. The members were asked to analyze the budget allocated to staff, ministries, outreach, debt, and maintenance. They were asked to assess how the facility is being used. Is it adequate for current needs? Could it be used for other causes? What are the short-term maintenance needs? Costs? Is the facility adequate for increased membership? How much more room will be needed? At what cost? Finally, they were asked to identify specific Facility and Finances development needs for the church's programs and recommend appropriate changes.<sup>18</sup>

Every action undertaken by a local church regarding church property must fall under the guidelines of the Discipline of the United Methodist Church.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Dykema, 63.

<sup>19</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2000*, 612–646. This section on church property outlines, in detail, every aspect of dealing with property and its use. It also instructs the local church in how to analyze the facility needs and the steps it must take in order to facilitate change.

preparation focuses attention upon the meaning of discipleship and the need for members to be in mission in all life's relationships.<sup>16</sup>

The reformulation of the definition of what it means to be a baptized member of a local congregation opens the door for every pastor to challenge the status quo and begin visioning for the future without the restraint of fear. Fear of conflicting with those laypeople, who always operated under the old definition even though discipleship was implied if not written into the definition, often kept pastors from following the lead of the Holy Spirit with regard to renewal. Remembering that change to the status quo is usually a bad thing, pastors and committed laypeople could stand on the Law<sup>17</sup> of the church.

Emley's Hill United Methodist Church began the process of changing the status quo in 1990. It began visioning for the future in 2000 at the end of a very long and arduous process of dismantling the status quo. It was at the time that we began the process of visioning for the future that the author was introduced to a program described in *Focus Your Ministry: Developing a Congregational Plan*, by Dykema. Emley's Hill began this process to understand how God was calling us to ministry in our community. The church needed to answer two strategic questions: where are we now? and where are we going? To answer these larger questions, the *Focus Your Ministry* program required the church to answer the following six questions:

1. Where are we now? ( History and Context)
2. Who are we as a church? (Core Ministry Values)
3. Why do we exist? (Purpose/Mission)

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<sup>16</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2000*, 136.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

engage. When Wesley speaks of building them up in holiness, he speaks directly to the process of discipleship—the desired primary focus and vision of our churches. Many Methodist churches have settled for the status quo, that is, the maintenance of worship. However, when one examines how this counsel is exemplified in the actual vision of the local church, one finds the tendency to preserve the existing state of affairs.

In defining what a church is, the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* for the year 2000 added a phrase to its definition of the local church at the beginning of paragraph 201: “The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”<sup>14</sup> Prior to this, the definition of a local church said nothing about disciple-making. It was implied by the very nature of what it means to be a Christian but was never actually stated, until this inclusion in the 2000 edition. The 2000 edition also changed and expanded the definition of church membership. In the *Discipline 1996*, paragraph 216 reads: “A baptized or professing member of any local United Methodist Church is a member of the global United Methodist connection and a member of the church universal.”<sup>15</sup> In the *Discipline 2000*, it was changed to read in paragraph 216:2:

Formation in the Baptismal covenant and in the call to ministry in daily life is a lifelong process and is carried on through all the activities that have educational value. The pastor gives specific leadership that prepares youth for their profession of faith and commitment to discipleship and for the Holy Spirit’s action confirming them in their faith and empowering their discipleship. This

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<sup>14</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2000* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2000), 127.

<sup>15</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996*, 219.

In paragraph 2543,<sup>20</sup> the Discipline addresses the focus of the Facility and finances task force directly by outlining exactly what a church must do in order to change its existing structure. It speaks directly to the reasoning a church must employ as it seeks to make change. The discipline refers the church to paragraph 201-204 which defines the mission of the church, the rationale for the mission, the process for carrying out the mission and the global nature of the mission.<sup>21</sup> “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”<sup>22</sup>

The ability to carry out this mission within the context of the local church has much to do with the building in which the church meets and does its ministry. The task force’s mandate to evaluate the effectiveness of the space available and its appropriate use was based on the need for proper stewardship of resources. How can a church effectively minister in the community without the proper resources? Scripture is the church’s guide in understanding God’s will with regard to stewardship and its application to facilities. Understanding that the church is the most significant arena through which disciples are made, it seems clear that a church’s facility must meet the needs of any program designed to make disciples. Structure is vital in providing space for program and quality worship. Disciples are best trained and encouraged in settings that are not distracting.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 115–116.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 114.

Part of the witness of the church to the world is its people's willingness to sacrifice personal desires to ensure that the church facilities meet the needs of the community that it is trying to enfold. God expects the church to grow. He expects that the commitment to spreading the Gospel will extend itself to providing the very best for those we seek to enfold. Paul speaks about this in his letter to the Corinthian church, "To the weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men that I may *by all means* save some."<sup>23</sup> The phrase "by all means" implies that Paul was willing to do whatever it took to bring people to Christ. Can the church do any less? Believers are given the sacred trust of proclaiming the Gospel through the primary venue of the church. Therefore, the church should be at least on par with other venues that vie for the attention of individuals. Within the United Methodist Church, all baptized believers who become members of a local congregation covenant with God and the church to sacrifice to the furtherance of the ministry with their prayers, presence, gifts, and service.<sup>24</sup> It is the sacred call of believers within the context of the United Methodist Church to sacrifice their time and their talents to the expansion of God's kingdom through the disciple-making process. Inherent in that process are the proper use of church buildings and the exploitation of every possible means to expand facilities to promote growth and discipleship. In the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness ..."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 1 Cor. 9:22 (NASB; my italics).

<sup>24</sup> *Book of United Methodist Worship: The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 38.

<sup>25</sup> Matt. 6:33 (NASB).

The systems analysis found in chapter four lays out the method by which the task force gathered the data; chapter five describes the strategic plan and data indications.

As Emley's Hill considered these committees and the mandates given them, the church was guided in its efforts, once again, by the Discipline of the United Methodist church. The Discipline defines our theological task in paragraph 63, section four:

As United Methodists, we are called to identify the needs both of individuals and of society and to address those needs out of the resources of Christian faith in a way that is clear, convincing, and effective. Theology serves the Church by interpreting the world's needs and challenges to the church and by interpreting the gospel to the world.<sup>26</sup>

Our theological task, as defined, helps the church undertake its ministry by giving direction to the way we formulate our understanding of the programs we seek to use to be more effective in our outreach to the individual and to the world.

We are called to be a thinking church and to be critical of the various expressions of faith, such as using *Focus Your Ministry* and by asking questions. Is it true? Is it true to the doctrinal positions of the United Methodist church? Is it appropriate to the setting in which it is used, and is it clear and cogent in its desired outcome? Is it credible in its content and is it based on love? Most importantly, is it faithful to the gospel? Does all of this lead us to a more constructive understanding of what we are trying to achieve and is it constructive? Are we able to utilize past experiences to inform our understanding of the process at hand as individuals and as a communal group that is informed by study, reflection, and prayer. All of this must be grounded in God's self-revelation in Jesus. The theological task ultimately must be practical. It must speak to our conversations,

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<sup>26</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996*, paragraph 63.

individually and corporately. Theological reflection must translate into daily life. It must inform our actions and our speech as we attempt to address the problems of the world around us. Clarity in our theological approach helps us to understand the nature of God in the world and our part in living out incarnationally the gospel of love.<sup>27</sup>

The results of this task force's inquiry and its recommendations can be found in chapters four and five.

#### Congregational Ministries Task Force

The purpose of the Congregational Ministries task force is to assess the effectiveness of the ministries of worship/prayer, education/discipleship, and care/fellowship and to recommend ways to improve them.<sup>28</sup>

Worship and prayer are the foundational ministries of the church. Scripture is abundantly clear that God expects His church to be a house of prayer. One of the most exciting moments of Jesus' ministry occurred after He had entered Jerusalem just before His crucifixion in which He proves how important prayer is to the Father by clearing the temple of moneychangers because they were desecrating God's house of prayer:

When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the moneychangers and the chairs of those selling doves, and he stopped everyone from using the temple as a marketplace. He said to them, "The

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 72–74. For a more complete definition of the theological task, see paragraph 64, section 4.

<sup>28</sup> Dykema, 43.

scriptures declare, 'My temple will be called a house of prayer for all the nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."<sup>29</sup>

Jesus reveals to us that the Father's love is more powerful than our sin. When we pray and acknowledge that we are sinners, we are seeking the powerful hand of God to lift us out of ourretched condition and deliver us as the psalmist said, "Do not cast me away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."<sup>30</sup> Our calling as a church is to provide direction and teaching as to how we should pray and the benefits of prayer. The church provides the setting wherein individuals can find refuge and peace in their quest for renewal because "our sin is ever before us."<sup>31</sup>

The definition of worship is more than the singing of hymns and lifting our hands in the sanctuary. It entails all the ministry of the church. Worship helps us to understand who we are in Christ and helps us to begin to formulate a relationship with the Father that includes every component of our life. As one is exposed to the Word, he or she is filled with God's story and is at the same time filled with God's Holy Spirit, which enables one to measure life experiences according to the Word one receives in the worship setting. The Word can and does speak to us in any given setting, but it is the responsibility of the church to provide a setting that is conducive to hearing the Word and enabling individuals to respond to it. This relationship involves conversation with God about the

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<sup>29</sup> Mark 11:15–17 (NASB).

<sup>30</sup> Ps. 51:11–12 (NIV).

<sup>31</sup> Ps. 51:3 (NIV).



things in one's life. It also encourages the individual to include God in every aspect of life.

Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.<sup>32</sup>

The task of any church body is to provide a place of worship and praise that convinces the participant of the reality that God loves him and hears his prayers. "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."<sup>33</sup>

The educational ministry of the church should provide for the teaching of the Word in Sunday school and in home fellowship groups to promote the ongoing process of discipleship.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and correctly handles the word of truth. ... But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> James 5:13–16 (NIV).

<sup>33</sup> Matt. 21:22 (NIV).

<sup>34</sup> 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14–17 (NIV).

The purpose of the Congregational Ministry Task Force is fulfilled as we assess effectiveness in these areas of ministry and recommend ways to improve them. This is laid out in chapters 4 and 5.

#### Member Involvement and Leadership Task Force

The purpose of the Member Involvement and Leadership task force was to determine

1. the effectiveness of committee structure and evaluation processes
2. the clarity of communication with the community, guests, and members
3. the type of work (inside or outside) that is being done in your church and who the recipients of this work are (members or nonmembers)
4. how to increase the effectiveness of committee structures, evaluation processes, communication, and programming for discipleship<sup>35</sup>

This task force was guided in its work by the Discipline as outlined in the following paragraphs:

Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>36</sup>

All members of Christ's universal church are called to share in the ministry which is committed to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of the United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is performed in family life, daily work, recreation, and social activities, responsible citizenship, the stewardship of

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<sup>35</sup> Dykema, 55.

<sup>36</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996*, paragraph 219.

property and accumulated resources, the issues of corporate life, and all attitudes toward other persons. Participation in disciplined groups is an expected part of personal mission involvement. Each member is called upon to be a witness for Christ in the world, a light and leaven in society, and a reconciler in a culture of conflict. Each member is to identify with the agony and suffering of the world and to radiate and exemplify the Christ of hope. The standards of attitude and conduct set forth in the Social Principles (Part III) shall be considered as an essential resource for guiding each member of the Church in being a servant of Christ on mission.”<sup>37</sup>

Scripture makes it clear that God wants His church to grow both spiritually and numerically. As Jesus called the Twelve into being and started the church, He calls individuals with different gifts into the church. These different gifts are given in order to fulfill the plan of God. As the Church was created in unity, the church and its members work together to bring others to the saving knowledge of Christ. Each individual believer is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of his or her office. The responsibility of the church body is to provide, in unity, the means to fulfill these God-given obligations. One can see it in the ministry of the apostles as they gathered in the upper room to pray and fast together as they were commanded by Jesus. The immediate result of this unity of spirit was the formation of the Church. We, as followers of Jesus, are no less obligated to provide in our churches opportunities for ministry in which good communication takes place, appropriate ministry opportunities are offered, and effective discipling takes place. The task force analyzed the existing structures in the fellowship and recommended changes where necessary.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., paragraph 220.

In *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, Leonardo Boff speaks of why Jesus used the Twelve to found the church and quotes Yves Congar, who writes on the church as community for service:

“Jesus instituted as structured community, a community in its entirety holy, priestly, prophetic, missionary, and apostolic, with ministries at its interior: some freely aroused by the Spirit, others bound by the imposition of hands to the institution and mission of the Twelve ... even those that are instituted and sacramental, take their position as services of precisely what the community is called to be and to do.”<sup>38</sup>

Boff suggests that:

...The church created the ministries of which it had need, within the framework of its essential apostolicity. Basically, the community must be outfitted with “roles of service” (Eph. 4–12) with those services, structures, and functions that become necessary in order to render present the risen One ...<sup>39</sup>

At times individuals request implementation of ministries that have no theological grounding. The church is responsible to have standards in place to identify spurious attempts to add activities in order to satisfy only a few. The church must also clarify that all ministry is for the good of the community and not for individual edification. Paul writes, “Now to each one the manifestation of the spirit is given for the common good.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), 29.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>40</sup> 1 Cor. 12:7 (NIV).

The task force reviewed the policies of the church to identify the standards used in the areas this task force was charged with examining. The discipline provided the theological framework that spoke to these issues. Boff suggests:

A theological reading enables us to accept as genuine ministries the various services that are rendered in community, some of them permanent and seeing to permanent needs, others transitory and bound up with persons having some special charism. Various services take on different forms as the Spirit becomes present and operative in the community.<sup>41</sup>

The results of the task force's effort can be seen in the findings and recommendation in chapter five, and the assessment tools are presented in chapter four.

#### Outreach Ministries Task Force

The purpose of the Outreach Ministries Task Force was to assess the effectiveness of the church's service and witness to nonmembers and to recommend improvements.

A church's outreach ministry is based upon adequately answering two of the strategic question posed earlier in this chapter: why do we exist, and whom is God calling us to serve? As stated earlier, the church exists for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by "proclaiming the gospel, seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the body of Christ; leading persons to commit their lives to God through Jesus Christ; nurturing people through worship, baptism, communion, Bible studies, prayer, and other means of grace; by sending persons into the world to live the love of Christ by feeding the hungry, freeing the oppressed, and working to have social structures

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<sup>41</sup> Boff,, 30.

align with the gospel; and continuing to seek the lost, welcome the stranger and gather persons into the community of the body of Christ.”<sup>42</sup>

We understand who we are as United Methodists by examining the stated definitions of the church and its mission, what a disciple is, and how the Word informs our vocations within the body. Very simply, the Discipline defines who we are called to serve:

Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.”<sup>43</sup>

Scripture’s clarity on the subject of whom the church should reach out to is abundantly clear. There should be no human criteria for determining who should be eligible to hear the gospel. It is for all, and “Whoever will may come.” The mandate to the church is to be inclusive of all people. Hence, outreach ministry should be designed to minister to every aspect of the immediate community. For United Methodists, this is a matter of not only scripture but of the Discipline. As true believers under the Lordship of Christ, we have an obligation to fulfill the Great Commission by going to all the people within our parish boundaries and by connection into the entire world. This is the strength of the local church as it is yoked to the greater connection of worldwide Methodism. The results of this task force and their recommendations are found in chapters four and five.

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<sup>42</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1996*, part V, chapter 1, section 1, 114.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 204.

### Vision Task Force

The purpose of the Vision task force was to prepare two or three draft vision statements for the church by gathering data to answer the question, “Where are we going?”

Another way of framing the question is to ask, “Where does God want us to be?” How does a church answer these questions? It begins with understanding a fundamental truth. God’s ways are not our ways. Our plans are not necessarily God’s plans. Even when plans appear to be effective ministry, they might be constructs of our own ego-driven desire to accomplish something of meaning for God. We are called to be followers of Jesus, not leaders of Jesus. We are not called to come up with ministry ideas that seem reasonable to our expectations. The church is called to prayerfully consider the Word as it speaks to our situations and to prayerfully discern how God is using our current circumstances and gifted individuals to accomplish His will. To be effective, any church vision for the future must take these things into account. True success comes from being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had planted in his heart by God a vision to bring scriptural holiness to the common people, to reach out to others because of the profound influence of the Holy Spirit in his life that assured him of the love of Jesus—a love that took upon it all the iniquity of the world and paid the ultimate price despite knowing that in our sinfulness we would still reject Him. Wesley set the course of his entire life to pursuing that vision and as a result, he changed the world. His charge to the people called Methodist was to do the same. Beginning with the Great Commission, we prayerfully consider our gifts, our circumstances, and the experiences of scripture as they

inform those circumstances and trust God for the direction. We are to see where God is and follow Him there. This vision has been handed down through the centuries of Methodism in its general sense to inform the church as to what its priorities should be. Looking back, we see how early Methodists lived out this vision:

... The mission of the Word—the preeminent reason for God giving us a revelation of His grace. The Word can never be divorced from the mission without losing its purpose. Nor can the mission be separated from the message without losing its power. Early Wesleyans kept the two together. ...

Out of such flaming zeal for souls emerged a missionary church in the new world. Moreover, to a remarkable degree, Methodists maintained this evangelistic focus well into the nineteenth century. Francis Asbury (who preached at Emley's Hill on several occasions) after forty-five years of labor, wrote in 1815:

The Methodist preachers, who had been sent by John Wesley to America, came as missionaries ... And now, behold the consequences of this mission. We have seven hundred traveling preachers, and three thousand local preachers, who cost us nothing. We will not give up the cause—we will not abandon the world to infidels.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most impressive aspects of early Methodism was the fact that most of the people involved in ministry were not professional ministers, they were laypeople. They were motivated to catch the vision because they saw the zeal for that vision in those who led them. There are today more Methodist churches than there are U.S. Postal

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<sup>44</sup> Coleman, 17–18.



Service offices, a direct result of people committed to following Jesus as He leads rather than trying to go it alone. All of these people understood the vision and the mission that came out of it because they were first disciples. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>45</sup>

Earlier, we hear Jesus tell His disciples, “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things.”<sup>46</sup>

Paul speaks to us through his writing to the Corinthian church regarding this subject when he writes, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”<sup>47</sup>

The church can only begin to understand God’s vision for the future as it pursues discipleship. Early on at Emley’s Hill, discipleship was begun by utilizing the process depicted in *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. The core teaching of the book was the experience of the seven realities of God:

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

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<sup>45</sup> John 15:5 (NIV).

<sup>46</sup> John 14:26 (NIV).

<sup>47</sup> 1 Cor. 2:14 (NIV).

5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.<sup>48</sup>

This Bible study was undertaken by the people who had expressed an interest in being discipled and had been active in the life of the church. The purpose the leadership had in mind was the only way Emley's Hill would be able to discern God's will for the future. This was the most important step the church took, in that it established a common understanding that worked to streamline planning meetings with no disruptions or disagreements. The Vision task force compiled data that helped the church reestablish Bible study as the primary teaching tool for those wanting to be discipled. Their findings are also listed in chapters four and five.

As stated earlier, the Discipline of the United Methodist Church establishes the theological framework for the work of the ministry. John Wesley imparted to his followers the necessity of defining Christian faith by the primacy of scripture, the influence of tradition and personal experience, and the confirmation of reason. We study the Bible to understand God's purposes. We are influenced by history and how God's Holy Spirit has spoken to the church throughout the ages. It helps us to gauge the accuracy of our interpretation of scripture and assures us of correct understanding. Wesley referred to common sense knowledge as helpful in understanding and applying

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<sup>48</sup> Henry T. Blackaby & Claude V. King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1990), 20.

what scripture and tradition revealed. Finally, we are instructed to utilize our collective experience to test the soundness of our knowledge. These four conditions work in harmony to help us understand the will of God and to see how His vision for the future includes and calls us to action.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the literature consulted in the formation of a plan for renewal of a rural United Methodist Church. The primary focus of this chapter is the literature that helped Emley's Hill in understanding the dynamics of church growth in the rural setting as well as those works that spoke to principles of growth. The author also includes those works that helped in formulating the spiritual mindset of the congregation for growth during the process.

#### Experiencing God

Early in the process of discipling the leadership of Emley's Hill, the author was introduced to *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King.<sup>49</sup> The book turned out to be pivotal in formulating a unified mindset for our leadership team. Having been through over ten years of bickering and turmoil with people who did not understand the most basic concepts of the Christian life and who made decisions for the ministry on the basis of whatever particular whim was most prevalent, it seemed that a prudent first step would be to get people into a unified mindset regarding understanding how to discern God's will. *Experiencing God* thus became a foundational study for Emley's Hill.

The primary learning experience of the leadership was Blackaby and King's seven realities of experiencing God. As detailed in the previous chapter, the seven

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

realities formulate the systematic process to discerning God's will. Being able to have every person in leadership thinking in the same way, a biblical way, changed the way we envisioned ministry. The book helped the leadership to begin to ask the right questions about who we are and where God was calling the church. In the past, all that was ever offered were opinions born out of worldly experience and fueled by individual desire. There was no unity in the body and therefore nothing could be discerned from the Father. At every turn, the Holy Spirit was quenched by personal preference over God's will. Experiencing God taught the church to ask the right questions. Instead of asking, "What do you think?" we asked, "How many of you sense that God clearly is directing us to proceed in this direction?" Although there were times at which individuals did not agree, more often than not there was unanimity. Blackaby and King point out that Paul appealed to this type of unity in his letter to the Corinthians, "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."<sup>50</sup>

*Experiencing God* presents a systematic approach to discerning the will of God. It provides individuals the means by which they may participate in the life of the church in unity as the leadership seeks God's will for the future.

Early in the process of discipling leadership, one of the leader's parents came to the church with a book that illustrated circumstances similar to ours and the steps their church took in order to facilitate growth (*When God Builds a Church: 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church*).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor. 1:10 (NIV).

<sup>51</sup> Bob Russell with Rusty Russell, *When God Builds a Church* (West Monroe: Howard Publishing, 2000).

Back in 1962, the Southeast Christian Church was founded with fifty people. In 1966 it had grown to 125. By the year 1998, Southeast Christian Church had grown to over 15,000 members. This extraordinary rise in membership and ministry is outlined in Russell's book as he explains his ten principles for growing a dynamic church. This book was read by the leadership of Emley's Hill. The principles were as follows:

1. Proclaim God's Word as truth and apply it to people's lives.
2. Worship God every week in spirit and in truth.
3. Develop Christ-centered leaders who lead by example.
4. Do your best in every area of service.
5. Be willing to step out with a bold faith and take risks.
6. Maintain a spirit of harmony.
7. Expect the congregation to participate in every ministry.
8. Continually practice agape love for one another.
9. Give generously of God's resources as a church and as individuals.
10. Commit enthusiastically to evangelism as your primary mission.

Russell's approach to ministry is based on an abiding faith in God's love for those who will fully commit to Him. Emley's Hill was blessed to receive this book from a man who attended Southeast church and whose daughter attended Emley's Hill. He believed that Emley's Hill had the same dynamic as Southeast did when it was about the same size. Many of the principles (e.g., the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth, and tenth) were already being implemented at Emley's Hill, and growth was taking place. However, the sixth and eighth were principles that were constantly being worked on, and this troubled area seemed to slow any significant growth. None of these principles is mutually exclusive. They are principles that need to be in place at one level or another at the same time. This stems from a theological commitment to the ministry of evangelism.

Reaching out to the world cannot be done unless there is truth, integrity, and holiness abiding in the church. Russell points out that although their church grew on a steady basis, as they adhered to these principles, he speaks of a time when things seemed to go flat.

Years ago our church hit a plateau. The services were dead. There was no growth. Something seemed to be missing ... I sat in the office ... something is wrong. I can't feel the moving of God's spirit among us. Two weeks later, we discovered that one of our key leaders had been having an affair for the past year ... But almost immediately after the situation was resolved, the church exploded in an outpouring of God's spirit and renewed sense of joy among the people.<sup>52</sup>

Although the geographic circumstances were not the same at Emley's Hill as they were at Southeast, the principles for renewal work in any situation as long as they are working in harmony.

Earlier in this thesis, the author mentioned that the process of breaking down the status quo at Emley's Hill took about nine to ten years, after which time God miraculously brought to this very rural church many new young people seeking to grow in faith. One of the first attempts at spiritual formation, as a group, was the study of the book *Spiritual Theology*,<sup>53</sup> by Diogenes Allen.

The guiding factor in the process of spiritual formation at Emley's Hill was to be in one accord: "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 75–76.

<sup>53</sup> Diogenes Allen, *Spiritual Theology: The Theology of Yesterday for Spiritual Help Today* (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1997).

prayer ...”<sup>54</sup> As the apostles gathered together in the upper room, they relied on the Holy Spirit’s leading. Their strength was in unity of community. This was the guiding principle in the process of spiritual formation.

It was clear as this process started that there were some who had difficulties with certain aspects of their lives and how God viewed their behavior. How is one supposed to respond to feelings and desires that seem so natural but at the same time seem so offensive to God. Allen’s book spoke to this very problem. Allen takes the reader through the eight deadly thoughts, which are modeled on the wilderness temptations of Christ. St. Gregory the Great changed these to his famous seven deadly sins. They are only deadly thoughts, according to Allen, until they are acted upon, at which time they become sins. Allen draws upon the history of the church to share the insights of the fourth-century desert fathers and mothers. In doing so, he links us together with problems we all face. These problems, which are common to us all, must be mastered in order to mature in the Christian life. Allen’s book takes the reader through each deadly thought and shows the reader ways to overcome these temptations. Together, the leadership of Emley’s Hill set a course of accountability for one another as they learned how to approach these temptations as leaders, so that the will of God concerning the renewal of the church would not be hindered.

One of the most significant studies the leadership engaged in was Neil T. Anderson’s *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Acts 1:14a (NIV).

<sup>55</sup> Neil T. Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1990).



It was this problem, common among the leadership, that led to the reading of two more of Anderson's books: *The Bondage Breaker*<sup>57</sup> and *Steps to Freedom in Christ*.<sup>58</sup> Each of the books took the reader deeper into territory only briefly covered in *Victory Over the Darkness*. Reading *The Bondage Breaker* helped the leadership understand how Satan seeks to break down our defenses by attacking our thought process and involving our weaknesses and experiences. All of this is common to every believer on one level or another. It can become debilitating if one does not find the true way to overcome. Anderson takes a detailed look at how we struggle with our identities even after we become Christians and how negative thoughts, irrational feelings, and habitual sins drive us from our God-given freedom back into old ways of behavior. The book *Steps to Freedom in Christ* is designed to focus, in an organized way, on how we overcome the barriers to freedom that the author originally shared in *The Bondage Breaker*. It was used primarily to reinforce what was learned in *The Bondage Breaker*. The concepts that were outlined in Anderson's books are biblically based and were helpful in continuing the quest for unity of spirit, a quest that was often interrupted by conflict. Even through this process of spiritual renewal, Emley's Hill still had to deal with conflict issues that arose. These issues were not limited to the problems faced by the leadership as mentioned above but also included problems that arose regarding generational issues. In *Resolving Church Conflicts*, G. Douglass Lewis defines conflict as "two or more objects trying to occupy the same space at the same time. The objects could be persons, groups, or organizations.

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<sup>57</sup> Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Neil T. Anderson, *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* (U.S.A.: Gospel Light, 2000).

In a world that seems to do everything possible to beat down the message of Christ and the significance of belonging to Him, Neil T. Anderson brings a message of hope. After this study, the leadership took to heart the message of the Gospel. Anderson outlines the life-changing miracle that occurs when one understands one's place in Christ. For the leadership of Emley's Hill, nothing made a more lasting and profound change in attitudes as this truth. Anderson takes the reader from the Fall of Creation and its resulting effects to the freedom each one of us has in Jesus. Coupled with this truth is the understanding that the Holy Spirit now dwells within us to help us overcome the temptations that plague every believer. What made this study so powerful was its detail of what it means to be a Christian.

No one can erase the past but, as Anderson points out, we can overcome the emotional pain of our past by understanding who we are now. Past experiences have a direct impact on how we see ourselves now, and Anderson walks the reader through the possibilities of freedom offered in Christ as we begin to understand ourselves in the light of what Christ did on the Cross.

As a Christian, you are primarily the product of the work of Christ on the Cross. You are literally a new creature in Christ. The old you is gone; the new you is here. The flesh, which represents how you process these events according to the world and without Christ, remains. But you are able to render it inoperative ... Believing the truth and walking in faith is what sets us free.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.,199–200.

The space is their interrelatedness, where the interaction of their goals or intentions takes place.”<sup>59</sup> Lewis recommends that in the process of managing conflict we:

1. identify the issue, the area of concern, or conflict; clarify the goals or wants of the various parties
2. search for alternatives that enable all parties to achieve as many of their goals as possible
3. establish a covenant to follow the chosen alternative<sup>60</sup>

This process has impact if the parties are of a common mind, which for Emley’s Hill was not the case at the outset. The process of spiritual formation that was undertaken was critical to the process of conflict management being effective. As soon as conflict arose it became obvious who was being faithful to the process of renewal and who was not. People who had mindsets opposite engaged in spiritual formation usually wanted their way with no alternatives. They eventually left.

Lewis’s assessment of conflict and sin helped in understanding that conflict does not necessarily arise out of some moral problem or rebellion against God but rather could very well be the result of differing sociological problems. “These differences can hardly be thought of as sinful since they are the result of a sociological process which is different for everyone. Conflicts arising out of these differences, therefore, are a result of the limitations of the human situation.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> G. Douglass Lewis, *Resolving Church Conflicts* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

Can conflict be a positive force for change? Yes! Once the idea of conflict being caused by sin or conflict being sin in itself was overcome, the leadership was able to find opportunities for grace that helped some people make the necessary changes that helped them to understand the vision that God had given to the church. Still, there are those who always believe there is no room for anyone else in their space (the church). It is people like this who—according to Gene Wood, author of *Leading Turnaround Churches*<sup>62</sup>—says, contribute to his ninety-five percent theory:

Simply stated, the ninety-five percent theory is that ninety-five percent of all serious problems in the church stem from a power struggle ... Power struggles are a different matter. They are, in fact, by definition fundamentally irresolvable. The question in a power struggle is, who will lead and who will leave?<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the greatest ongoing problem at Emley's Hill was a constant power struggle. People who have been conditioned to believe that they are the center of the universe are not apt to relinquish that position when they are not forced to by economic considerations, such as their jobs. They will certainly not back off their demands when they are part of what they consider a volunteer community that has no power over them. This type of thinking is prevalent in the minds of many unchurched people. They do not understand the concept of submission to others in authority outside of work and consider it their right to make demands and cause problems if necessary to achieve their aims.

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<sup>62</sup> Gene Wood, *Leading Turnaround Churches* (St. Charles: ChurchSmart Resources, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 47.

The church is empowered by the Holy Spirit, who leads by revealed truth in the Word, which tells us that we must submit to those that God has raised over us. Woods agrees with Lewis in saying that conflict is not always a bad thing. It is not always a struggle between good and evil. Effective turnaround pastors know this. The leadership at Emley's Hill understood this and believed that people who were constantly engaged in power struggles would be better off somewhere else. It is always a matter of grace to hear all sides of the issue but sometimes, for the sake of the mission, some people should be asked to leave. For Emley's Hill this decision was never taken lightly but considered only after much prayer and fasting. However, there was always a sense of urgency to resolve the issue as quickly as possible so as not to give power to the minority. Woods says that "most status quo churches are overrun by members with a subconscious desire for continuity and tradition. By moving ahead with the majority decision—despite opposition—the back of tradition-driven thinking is finally broken."<sup>64</sup>

It is the church's sacred duty to move forward with the revealed will of God for the church rather than cave in to the demands of the minority. The church can move in only one direction at a time.<sup>65</sup> It should be pointed out that scripture itself speaks of how to deal with factious people: "But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the law; for they are worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>66</sup> Titus 3: 9–11 (NASB).

Controversies and disputes are common occurrences in life as well as in the church. How the church deals with these problems is a telling sign as to whether God is in control or not.

In the beginnings of the church, disputes arose over whether or not to enforce the Law of Moses with regard to gentiles joining the church. Paul said no; others did not agree. The solution was to seek wisdom from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The dispute was brought to the council and discussed. The answers came from a council that was of one mind. This was the key to further success in reaching out to the gentiles and others and teaches us that in order to be effective in ministry the church should strive to be of one mind, reached by consensus. Stevens and Collins speak about this in their book *The Equipping Pastor*. The authors speak about the council of Jerusalem as:

A positive example of morphogenesis (feedback leading to constructive change) is the extraordinary resolution of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–29) in which the church changed the terms upon which Jews and gentiles could have fellowship together. On the simplest level, homeostasis means that systemic change will be fervently resisted and no program will be adequate to effect a revolution.<sup>67</sup>

The answer to the presenting problem was not to attack the individuals but to find an appropriate response that would benefit the whole system. The council took this as an opportunity to address problems that had the potential to destroy the growing church by taking power away from the minority who wanted a return to the old ways and offering

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<sup>67</sup> Stevens and Collins, 55.

solutions that helped everyone understand what Gods' will was for the church. Indeed, a wonderful example of overcoming a negative example of homeostasis.

The leadership of Emley's Hill was cognizant of the need to grow as individuals and the need to grow as a group. No book was more helpful in creating leaders who relied on God than was *Spiritual Leadership*, by J. Oswald Sanders.<sup>68</sup> For any true renewal to take place spiritual renewal must first take place in the heart of the leader. Sanders's chapter on the essential qualities of leadership was helpful in developing a framework for growth as leaders. He lists those qualities as discipline, vision, wisdom, the capability of swift and clear decision making, courage, humility, integrity, and sincerity. These were not just qualities for leadership but integral parts of a holistic Christian lifestyle that helped renovate a small rural Methodist church into a dynamic thriving ministry for the kingdom of God.

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<sup>68</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

When Emley's Hill began the process of renewal within the congregation, it was determined that a plan was needed in order for the church to systematically assess its members, community, and ministry. Contacting denominational agencies proved to be fruitless in that a device to accomplish what Emley's Hill was attempting was not available. We decided to look outside the denominational resources and were introduced to Earl D. Dykema's *Focus Your Ministry*.

This chapter lays out the process of gathering the pertinent information that was necessary to evaluate the spiritual health of the congregation and to determine the potential for growth in the community. It also alerted us to weakness and particular strengths that would be helpful in formulating future strategies.

This process took the church through a six-month journey outlined in ten steps, all of which are presented in detail in this chapter:

- Step 1: orientation meeting
- Step 2: task force preparation for assessment workshop
- Step 3: meeting to draft core ministry values and purpose statement
- Step 4: assessment workshop
- Step 5: first congregational forum
- Step 6: task force preparation for planning workshop
- Step 7: planning workshop
- Step 8: second congregational forum
- Step 9: decision process
- Step 10: implementation and evaluation



Chapter 2 outlines the process of how the church answered the six strategic questions posed by *Focus Your Ministry*. This chapter details the ten-step process that was used to answer the six strategic questions.

### Getting Started

The process began with the appointment of a focus facilitator, who was an active member of the congregation. The pastor was asked to fill this role. The focus facilitator was responsible for the overall operation of the process. This included selecting task force participants, scheduling meetings, collecting agenda items, preparing information for meetings, making sure each task force head had information prior to meetings, and overseeing every meeting of the task force focus committee. There also were five task force committees headed by a chairperson for each task force, also chosen from among the congregation. The job of the task force chairperson was to oversee the collection of data assigned to that committee. Each task force chairperson recruited members for the respective committees. Task force members were obliged to gather information using the instruments provided by *Focus Your Ministry*. The focus committee, made up of the focus facilitator and the five heads of the task force committees, was responsible for overseeing the process.

The process was designed to take up to six months to complete. Emley's Hill completed the process within that period. The process is laid out in ten steps over that period:

Step 1: orientation meeting

Step 2: preparation for assessment workshop

Step 3: meeting to draft core ministry values and purpose

- Step 4: assessment workshop
- Step 5: first congregational forum
- Step 6: task force preparation for planning workshop
- Step 7: planning workshop
- Step 8: second congregational forum
- Step 9: decision process
- Step 10: implementation and evaluation

### Step One: Orientation Meeting

All members of the focus committee and all members of each task force attended the initial meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting was to outline the process, distribute material pertinent to each task force, and to set a time line for steps two through ten. The pastor, serving as focus facilitator, used the meeting to encourage each person to persevere through the ensuing months. Although each person had other pressing obligations in their lives, this process should take priority. The future of Emley's Hill Church was at stake. Each member responded to the request by expressing the desire to stay in touch with one another and the willingness to do so on a daily or weekly basis, not just to pray together and attend meetings but also to socialize with one another's families. This was suggested as a way to draw closer together and to stay in one accord. The concept of one accord was important because it was realized that, for Emley's Hill, this was a new beginning. Everything done from this point on would have an effect on the church's future. Every person at the meeting had been through the *Experiencing God* Bible study and knew the importance of being in one accord in order to discern God's will. In addition, the six strategic questions were discussed:

1. Where are we now?
2. Who are we as a church?

3. Why do we exist?
4. Whom is God calling us to serve?
5. Where does God want us to be?
6. What is our plan to accomplish our vision?

All of the assignments were reviewed along with the Questionnaire for Setting Future Direction of the Church. This questionnaire was distributed to the congregation by the Vision task force, and the results were presented at the planning meeting (step 7). The worksheet “the Biblical purpose of the church” was handed out and discussed in preparation for the meeting in which the core ministry values and the purpose statement would be drafted (step 3). The date was set for the first congregational forum.

#### Step Two: Prepare for the Assessment Workshop

Each task force met on a regular basis and began to gather information using the instruments provided by *Focus Your Ministry*. The process took about two months and paved the way for the assessment workshop (step 4).

#### Step Three: Meeting to Draft Core Ministry Values and Purpose

The meeting, held one month after the orientation meeting, was held at the church on a weekday evening. This time slot was selected to ensure that every member of the Focus Your Ministry group could attend. Also invited were long-time members and other members whose Christian maturity would be valued for productive input. The purpose of the meeting was to develop core ministry values and a purpose statement.

Our initial discussions centered on understanding what core beliefs are.

According to *Focus Your Ministry*, core ministry values are the convictions that help

congregations understand what is really at the center of our understanding of how we think of ministry. How do we understand the role of each individual? How do we understand the motivations that guide our decision-making? According to *Focus Your Ministry*, core ministry values:

1. are conscious or unconscious assumptions that guide our actions
2. demonstrate our priorities and are confirmed by our behavior, not just words
3. are essential ingredients that shape how we do ministry
4. are values for which we will live and die<sup>69</sup>

This was the most critical meeting for all involved, because its outcome would determine those items that we would deem important and those that we would allow to fall by the wayside. This meeting was pivotal, as it forced people to think through issues and desires and feelings. Everything was gauged by what was revealed in scripture. Those values that did not hold up under the weight of scripture were examined to determine why. The values were discussed and taken apart until everyone was satisfied that they not only represented what the core values were but also aligned with our understanding of the Word.

In the second part of the meeting we drafted our purpose statement, or mission statement. It was suggested by *Focus Your Ministry* that the question “Why?” be asked about everything that was done in the church. It was in this way that the true purpose of the church was delineated. It was then a matter of putting the purpose into a simple sentence that would be easily remembered.

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<sup>69</sup> Dykema, 23.

#### Step Four: The Assessment Workshop

The assessment workshop took place two months after the orientation meeting. The meeting took place over a two-day period to cover all the material presented and to accomplish all the requirements that were laid out for the meeting. All members of the committee and all task force members and their spouses were asked to attend this meeting. The goal of the workshop was to see where the church was, where it was going, and what ministries, values, and goals had shaped the ministry thus far. The committee was also to ask the question, “Is this where we want to be seven years from now.”<sup>70</sup>

Prior to the workshop, the pastor met with each task force to make sure that the two-page summary of their key findings<sup>71</sup> would be available for the congregation and the committee members at least one week before the assessment workshop. In addition, the draft core ministry values and the purpose statement were printed and distributed to the congregation and the committee members prior to the meeting.

The workshop met to address four questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Who are we as a church?
3. Why do we exist?
4. Whom is God calling us to serve?

The first question was discussed first. Each of the five task forces gave a summary of their reports. All the participants were then asked to analyze the information from the task forces by using the SWOTS (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

solutions) analysis. The SWOTS analysis is a way of identifying the five aforementioned traits to ascertain the overall picture of the ministry. The gathering was broken down into small groups of four or five, who were asked to list on paper their findings. Each group was then asked to re-form and list the number one item from each question. When this information was determined, it was recorded and given to the heads of all task forces and to each member of the congregation in preparation for the planning workshop and the congregational forum.

The group then moved on to the second question: who are we as a church? The pastor then shared with the group the meaning and nature of core ministry values and reviewed the work accomplished in the second meeting in which draft core ministry values were established. The group was once again divided into small groups and asked to review the draft core ministry values and to compress them into six core ministry values that would guide the church in the future. These core ministry values would be presented at the congregational forum for the church's review.

The next question asked was, why do we exist? Breaking into small groups again, the draft purpose statements were reviewed and each group was asked to edit them into one statement. As the groups reassembled, the statements were reviewed and a consensus was reached to determine the final purpose statement, which would also be presented at the congregational forum.

We then asked the final question: whom is God calling us to serve? The question was answered in part by the reports of the task forces, which identified individuals as future members. A review of the Outreach Ministries task force report, to identify any significant trends found, led the full group to discuss what ministries should be

considered in the future. The most significant part of the meeting was the point at which the group once again broke into small groups and discussed Isaiah 54:2

Enlarge the place of your tent;  
Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not;  
Lengthen your cords,  
And strengthen your pegs. (NASB)

Each group was then asked to answer the following questions:

1. Where will the next twenty-five or fifty new members come from?
2. Who are they?
3. What will attract them?
4. What will help them to stay?

The groups reassemble a final time to share their findings and what the findings would mean in helping to determine future ministry.

#### Step Five: The First Congregational Forum

The purpose of the congregational forum was to provide an opportunity to the congregation to give input on information that was gathered by the focus committee and the outcomes of the assessment workshop. In this way, the congregation was always current with where the focus committee was in the process.

Prior to the meeting, the committee prepared a package that included the SWOTS analysis exercise, the draft core ministry values, a purpose statement, the results of the “Whom is God calling us to serve?” exercise, and the two-page reports from each of the task forces. This information was distributed at the meeting.

During this meeting, the attendees were able to voice their opinions about each aspect of the reports to date. They were also encouraged to share their ideas for the future. Immediately following the congregational forum the focus committee met to incorporate all the ideals shared from the congregants, write new versions of the core ministry values, purpose statement, and people groups identified for ministry.

#### Step Six: Task Forces Prepare for the Planning Workshop

After reviewing all the information gathered and reviewed at the assessment workshop, each task force was asked to prepare plans and goals for their area of ministry.

The Congregational Ministries task force reviewed the identified issues that needed their attention and reviewed the core ministry values, purpose statement, list of potential new members, and plans developed in light of them. They also agreed to design a ministry plan for Congregational Ministries (worship, education, and care/fellowship). They were to write several goal statements for each ministry area and short- to long-range plans (one to three years) to implement each goal.

The Outreach Ministries task force reviewed information from the assessment workshop and identified issues that needed attention. In addition, they also agreed to review core ministry values, purpose statement, and potential new member information along with ministry plans for these areas. The ministry plan was to include a purpose statement for their area of ministry, several goal statements for each function of their ministry area, and one- to three-year plans with goals.

The membership involvement and leadership task force also reviewed information from the assessment workshop and identified issues, reviewed core ministry values and



purpose statements, and designed a ministry plan for their area of ministry with one- to three-year plans and goals.

Likewise, the Facility and Finances task force was charged with disseminating information relative to their area of ministry and reviewing all the previous information gathered. They also were to develop goals and plans for the next one to three years.

The Vision task force was unique in that it reported its findings to the Planning workshop only. Their task was to distribute a copy of “Questionnaire for Setting Future Direction of the Church” and then interpret the data for the planning workshop. They were to utilize all the instruments provided by *Focus Your Ministry* for developing a vision statement and review all information gathered at the assessment workshop in order to prepare two or three quality vision statements for the church. Although each task force had much to do in their areas of ministry, the Vision task force was charged with developing what would be a crucial part of six-month process. The vision statement would become the rallying cry for the congregation and a statement that would be memorized and relied upon for understanding future direction.

#### Step Seven: The Planning Workshop

Committee members, all task force members, the administrative council members, and all spouses attended this workshop. The workshop was an all-day session that convened to answer two questions: Where does God want us to be? What is our plan to accomplish our vision? As in other workshops, each task force agreed to review the work accomplished at the assessment workshop and to write out the goals and plans for their

particular area of ministry. The reports were given to the focus facilitator and then combined and given to all who were to attend the planning workshop.

In answering the question, “Where does God want us to be?” the Vision task force shared its findings from the returned “Questionnaire for Setting Future Direction of the Church.” The meeting broke into small groups to analyze the data and returned with ideas that were drawn on large sheets of paper illustrating their concept for the ministry’s future. Various vision statements emerged from common themes recognized in the drawings and discussions. They were also compared with the vision statements developed by the Vision task force. At this meeting, the task force developed a vision statement for distribution at the second congregational forum.

In answering the second question, “What is our plan to accomplish our vision?” the workshop participants reviewed the draft plans and goals developed by the five task forces and, utilizing the vision statements previously developed, refined draft goals and plans to be presented at the second congregational forum. This meeting was designed to develop long-term goals (five to seven years) that would later be analyzed by the smaller groups who would develop short-term (one year), or support, goals for the ministry. Assisting in the development of these goals was the supplement provided by *Focus Your Ministry* titled SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, related to vision, time-framed) goals.<sup>72</sup> This involved looking at the draft goals and weighing their effectiveness in meeting the criteria. The goals and plans were then laid out utilizing the criteria, and the focus committee developed a two-page summary of the goals and plans along with a vision statement that was presented at the second congregational forum.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 87.

### Step Eight: The Second Congregational Forum

For the second congregational forum, the following information was collected: core ministry values, purpose statement, vision statement, one- and two-year SMART ministry plans, and all previous data that were collected and distributed to the congregation in advance of the forum. The purpose of the meeting was to enlist the support and encourage ownership of the data presented. The congregation was asked to respond to the following questions by a show of hands:

1. I believe our church members can and will identify with this vision statement.
2. I believe we are presently moving toward the fulfillment of this vision.
3. I believe all our church activities must clearly relate to this vision statement.

The response was recorded and the congregation was lead through the SMART congregational plan; comments and suggestions were then sought.

### Step Nine: Decision Process

At this point, all that was left to do was compile the report for the congregation. This was done and the report was distributed. The congregation was encouraged to respond with feedback as the ministry steps unfolded and were actualized.

The church concluded the month-long process with a celebratory worship service.

### Step Ten: Implementation and Evaluation

As the new ministry plans began to unfold and were implemented, regular feedback was called for from those individuals who were in charge of the different task forces left in

place to oversee the particular ministries developed from the congregational plan. The process facilitated the transformation of Emley's Hill United Methodist Church from a church with a desire to do something for God to a church with a definite plan of action and a unified body seeking to accomplish God's will. The months following the completion of the congregational plan proved to be the most effective ministry that Emley's Hill had ever accomplished. This was recognized by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference by awarding the author with the Denman Prize for Evangelism, an award given for church growth using innovative and creative techniques in discipling.

*Focus Your Ministry* helped Emley's Hill more clearly understand the process for renewal by organizing the gathering of information. Dividing the data collection into the various task forces enabled us to dissect the church's current status and to project its future needs. Experience has shown that long projects that involve careful analysis need comprehensive guidelines in order to keep people on track. *Focus Your Ministry* provided the necessary forms, questionnaires, and direction to allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the church and its ministry. Key to the process was communication. Throughout the many months of data gathering, good communication was accomplished through the meetings and congregational forums that *Focus Your Ministry* recommended.

Emley's Hill was led to use *Focus your Ministry* through ecumenical contacts, vis-à-vis conversations about church renewal and the lack of assessment tools available within the United Methodist System. No such tools are available due in large part to the fact that United Methodist Churches are not required to do congregational analysis.

*Focus Your Ministry* helps churches answer the critical evaluative questions, "Where are we now?" and "Where are we going?" among others. The answers to these questions

form the building blocks for renewal. The next chapter describes, in detail, the findings produced by the data and the recommendations for renewal.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES

This chapter focuses on the results recorded by all five of the task forces. Each task force was given specific guidelines for formulating the reports they presented to the congregation. The process of collecting and assessing the data is described in chapter four. These results represent the foundational documents used in planning ministry at Emley's Hill United Methodist church.

The process required many hours of sacrifice on the part of the people involved and resulted in the establishment of ministries that are viable and growing. One such ministry is the Good Samaritan Food and Clothing Pantry. This outreach has grown from serving two to three families a week to over two hundred families a month.

Other ministries that remain strong are the youth work and vacation Bible school (VBS), which minister to over one hundred fifty young people each summer.

Overall, the process of renewal was successful in bringing people to a deeper relationship with God and building up the church. Membership increased dramatically and the financial condition of the church improved from deficit spending to solvent during this period. Although there were problems along the way, overall the process was effective in renewing the church and in strengthening its ministry in the community and in the hearts and minds of its members. Here are the results of much hard work and loyal commitment to Christ and His church.

### Congregational Ministries Task Force

The purpose of this task force “is to assess the effectiveness of the ministries of worship/prayer, education/discipleship, and care/fellowship and recommend ways to improve them.”<sup>73</sup> Each task force was asked to answer questions posed in *Focus Your Ministry*. Following are the results of information gathered in answering the questions asked in preparation for the assessment workshop and the planning workshop along with the conclusions and recommendations.

In preparation for the assessment workshop, the task force was asked the following questions; answers appear immediately after the question.<sup>74</sup>

1. Give a summary of the history and development of the congregation, noting key leaders, events, and issues that have shaped the life of the church.

Regarding the question of church leadership, the earliest records available dated back to 1815. From 1815 until 1988, one hundred fifty-one pastors were appointed. Many of the pastors stayed only one year, and there were many years in which two pastors served part-time during the same period. Pastor Greg Bruton (1988 to present) was the church’s first full-time appointment.

2. Develop a profile of your church’s growth patterns.

Concerning church growth, the task force found that the first church building was erected in 1790 and burned down and was rebuilt in 1807. The bell tower was added in

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<sup>73</sup> Dykema, 43.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 44. (Note: The author has edited some of the questions for the purpose of clarity in reading the results formulated by the task force. The changes made do not affect the outcome of the answers. It should also be noted that the task force answered none of the optional questions.)

1855. Fellowship Hall was added in 1969, and classrooms and office space were added in 1993. Electricity was added in 1948 and telephone service was connected in 1992.

3. Count the number of attendees on three consecutive Sundays and calculate the average attendance.

The average attendance was one hundred thirty-seven. The task force deemed it relevant to note that the church has seating for one hundred eight cars and parking for fifteen cars including one handicapped space.

4. Complete the "People Flow Chart".

To construct the People Flow Chart the task force sent a survey to a limited number of regular attendees; slightly less than half the recipients responded. The chart examines why people came to Emley's Hill, why they came back, how they've been nurtured, and ministries they would like to develop or see developed.

People have been attracted to Emley's Hill primarily through two types of invitations: a letter sent out by the church and personal invitation from friends. People came back for two main reasons: Pastor Greg's Bible-based teaching and preaching, and the children's ministry. People have been nurtured by participating in Bible studies, attending Sunday services, and using the prayer lists. Ministries that attendees would like to see developed and would like to take part in include: theater/arts, children's soccer team, counseling, music, teen/young adult ministries, prayer ministry, evangelism, prayer/reading to and for the sick at home and hospitalized, church growth training, and training for other ministries. Of those surveyed, 13% cautioned that church growth should include a five-year and a ten-year plan and should consider how other congregations have dealt with preparing for church growth and preparing current membership for ministry to



future attendees. They did not see this time frame and calculating as a lack of faith but rather as worshipping and serving God with their minds as well as their hearts, and as an expression of patience and steadfastness that God can, and will, accomplish His will in His time.

The implications and conclusions are as follows.

The number of people attending Sunday service exceeds the building's seating capacity. The church needs to seek alternatives to accommodate current and future attendance. The church has undertaken and accomplished facility construction and growth in the recent past. Using the statistical information available, the church has only begun to show significant growth in attendance in recent years. Prior to this, there was little to no growth over the history of the church since its inception. This could be a result of the way that pastors were appointed. As previously noted, there were one hundred fifty-one pastors appointed over a two-hundred-year period, with all but the current one serving part-time. In retrospect, it is a testament to God's Holy Spirit at work that the church survived at all. It is somewhat of a concern that only 50% of those to whom the survey was mailed took the time to respond. Given that this was a random sampling of regular attendees, the implication is that only 50% of the regular attendees are in favor of church growth. Those who did respond, however, showed passion for their ideas, concerns, and aspirations for the church. Emley's Hill attendees possess a wide variety of talents and interests within its current population. The talents, interests, ideas, concerns, aspirations, and passion discovered through the People Flow Chart are consistent with the current church vision. This balance of people is not at Emley's Hill by accident. God is

sovereign, and He will accomplish, in His time, His great plan through Emley's Hill, if only we remain faithful to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18).

In preparation for the planning workshop, the task force was asked to identify issues that needed attention from this task force, to develop plans for ministry in light of the work done for the assessment workshop, to design a ministry plan, which included a purpose statement and general goals using the SMART format. This information was also used in formulating the final report presented to the congregation at the conclusion of the process.

The Facility and Finances task force determined that the current space was inadequate for worship and that new space was needed for new members, to hold seminars, concerts, and various youth group activities. The task force recommended that a new budget be established to support these ministries. Future leadership will require training in order to effectively minister to the members and to develop outreach ministry to the community. At this point, the membership is unified and is aware of the need of personal responsibility concerning involvement.

The church should develop new ministries for the training of greeters and hospitality staff and for the nurturing and follow-up of members and new believers. It is recommended that new Bible studies be developed in order to accommodate these ministries.

The Congregational Ministries task force developed a purpose statement in the form of an acrostic:

O—open, one, obedience

U—understanding, unity, unfailing, unconditional love

T—trust, training, transformation, trinity, truth

R—reach, respect, revelation, revive, rejoice

E—educate, entertain, exalt, empathy

A—activities, atonement, anointing

C—communicate, covenant, comfort

H—harvest, help, hope, humility

All of this done so that the love of Jesus is spread and the needs of our neighbors are met.

It is also suggested that support be given for long-term mission projects and for members to be involved in mission trips. None of this should be done at the expense of local missions already supported. Outreach would also include sponsorship of local seminars and activities that would draw the community. Youth group programs should be established. There should be a commitment to public relations.

#### SMART Goals and Plans

##### *Missions*

1. We will pledge \$1000 to a long-term mission in 2004, with a 10% increase every year.
2. We will send at least twenty people on a short-term mission trip in 2004 and financially support 50% of the expenses.
3. We will obtain grant money to start a skateboard ministry.

##### *Outreach*

1. We will sponsor two seminars/activities for the year 2004, and increase by one each year.
2. We have achieved our goal regarding the establishment of a youth ministry.

3. We will give quarterly reports to newspapers to keep the community updated on the church's activities and make public service announcements on Christian radio.

#### Outreach Ministries Task Force

"The purpose of the Outreach Ministries task force is to assess the effectiveness of your church's service and witness to nonmembers and to recommend improvements."<sup>75</sup>

The task force's primary objective for the assessment workshop was to gather demographic data for the area surrounding the church and to develop a profile of population growth and past and future projections, and to develop a profile of the basic characteristics of those living in the area. This objective would enable the task force to identify people groups and community needs to which the church would be able to minister in the future. The task force answered the following questions in preparation for the assessment workshop. Answers immediately follow the respective questions below.

1. Identify the basic service area of your church's ministry.

The basic service area for the church is a ten-mile radius, which includes Allentown, Millstone, Roosevelt, Upper Freehold, New Egypt, and a portion of Jackson Township.

2. Develop a population growth profile of the past twenty years and the projections for the next ten years in your service area.

The total population of this area was 29,068 as of the year 2000. The projected population for the year 2010 was 27,259 a decrease of 1809.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Dykema, 50.

The most rapid population growth between 1980 and 2000 was in Millstone, Upper Freehold, Jackson, and New Egypt.

3. Optional (not done).

4. Develop a profile of the basic characteristics of residents in your service area using categories such as age, race, education, income, occupation, mobility, housing, and marital status.

Race make-up is 94% white; the remaining 6% comprises black, Hispanic, Asian, and others. The population can be broken down into age groups: 0–14, 21%; 15–34, 24%; 35–54, 34%; and 55+, 21%. The population dwells mostly in single-family dwellings, with single moms making up 11%, single dads 3%, and married with children 85%. In light of these residential characteristics, it is estimated that the target market is families between the ages of 26 and 64.

5. Identify groups of people in your service area that your church might possibly reach through Outreach Ministries, and estimate the size of each group. These are people whom God may be calling you to serve.

In identifying the people groups in our service area that the church might be able to reach through Outreach Ministries, four of the five age groups were targeted for youth activities: 0–9, 10–13, and 14–18. This entails approximately 25–30% of the population. The next group was single parents, making up 14% of the population, and families with children, regardless of marital status. The suggested outreach programs include monthly

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<sup>76</sup> Numbers reflect actual number of people, not the number of households. Jackson Township has a population of 40,759 but we counted only those people living in our target radius, that is, approximately 15% of the total population.

sports activities, teen classes, various seminars and concerts, and an annual extreme skating festival.

6. Identify possible community service needs that your church might respond to (including those in which your church is already involved) and estimate the size of each group or the extent of each need. Gather this information from community agencies and local government sources.

Social justice ministries in which the church should participate are disaster relief efforts through the Red Cross and Emergency Management Services. Although there are twenty shelters currently located in Ocean and Monmouth Counties, there are none in the western end of Monmouth County. Establish a food pantry and clothing depot. Sponsorship of long-term and short-term missionaries should be a priority.

7. Estimate the number of unchurched people in your area.

With almost 30,000 people living in the target radius, only 17.5% attend church, as compared with the national average of 65% who are involved at some level.

The Outreach Ministries task force presented eleven proposals to the planning workshop for consideration in the overall formulation of ministry plans

1. Skateboard ministry funded by securing grants and by financial campaigns that involve the community.
2. Woodworking ministry funded by charging for classes to learn a trade and the sale of handmade items.
3. Machine shop ministry that includes auto repair and bodywork classes. Funding could be supported by repair work and charging for classes.
4. Adult literacy classes run by volunteers and targeted to marginalized people.

5. Music ministry including concert outreaches along with finding individuals who would be willing to teach music at the church and donate a portion of the proceeds. The idea of a Christian music Web site would warrant consideration.
6. Bus ministry funded through car washes and renting the vehicle to other groups. It would also provide transportation for outings to sporting events, fishing trips etc.
7. Soup kitchen/cafeteria funded by donations, bake sales, catering and charging for home economics classes.
8. Public service ministries that include home repair, meals to the needy and shut-ins funded by the church members.
9. Video broadcasting (cable television) to have constant information available to the local community about ministries and upcoming events.
10. Pre-school run by a private entity that will generate income for other ministries.
11. Gymnasium funded by a capital fund campaign enabling recreational activities and various other uses.

These are the general goals and the ministry plan put forth using the SMART plan outline in preparation for the planning workshop.

#### Member Involvement and Leadership Task Force

The purpose of the Member Involvement and Leadership task force is to determine:

1. the effectiveness of committee structure and evaluation processes
2. the clarity of communication with the community, guests, and members

3. the type of work (inside or outside) that is being done in your church and the recipients of the work (members or nonmembers)
4. how to increase the effectiveness of committee structures, evaluation processes, communication, and programming for discipleship<sup>77</sup>

In preparation for the assessment workshop, the Member Involvement and Leadership task force was asked to complete the following:

1. Secure copies of current job descriptions of all staff members. Briefly describe processes used for annual review and evaluation of staff. Identify any areas in the job descriptions or review processes that need improvement.

There are job descriptions for the pastor and chairpersons for all committees in the United Methodist Church. They are published every four years in conjunction with the General Conference, which also meets every four years. This includes a process for evaluation and annual review for staff members.

2. Review your church's organizational chart of leadership and committee structure along with printed job descriptions and evaluation procedures. Note any areas that need further development in structure and organization. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- a. Do the committees have goals?
- b. How are the committee members selected?
- c. What have the committees accomplished (relative to their job descriptions)?

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<sup>77</sup> Dykema, 55.



d. What might be done to help the committees do their work?

The task force identified five work groups: finance, Sunday school, outreach, youth group and VBS. The church is in the process of writing clearly stated purposes and goals, although the groups do engage in planning for the ministry and have authority to act within its assigned responsibilities.

3. Complete the “Analysis of Communication” worksheet.<sup>78</sup>

An analysis of communication revealed that the activities, programs, and committees are internally focused.

4. Conduct an age census of your church using the “Age Census” worksheet.<sup>79</sup>

The Age Census revealed that the majority of the adult population falls between 35 and 44 years of age. The age of the majority of the children is between 5 and 14.

5. Assess the volunteer workforce and the recipients of your church’s programming using the “Worker Analysis” worksheet.<sup>80</sup>

The analysis of this worksheet revealed ministries that were inwardly focused.

6. Major findings and facts; implications and conclusions.

a. An annual review and evaluation process of staff members needs to be updated.

b. Create a chart that exemplifies the “Analysis of Structures, Work Groups and Work Processes.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 58.

- c. The work groups need clearly written goals and objectives. Their purpose needs to be identified. Training does exist for these groups, however, there needs to be more consistency in attending these trainings.
- d. If the committees had written goals and plans, this would allow for evaluation of progress toward the achievement of these goals.
- e. The church needs to focus on external communication to become more visible to the outside community.

The Member Involvement and Leadership task force was asked to design a ministry plan using the SMART design and concentrating on their area of ministry concern.

1. Goal: Review and update or develop as needed job description and evaluation procedures for all the church staff.

Evaluate: The church will evaluate all the current church staff positions upon completion of the congregational forum. New positions will be identified and created as needed, under the guidance and direction of the Administrative Council. The church will review, modify, and/or develop church staff job descriptions. The evaluation of existing positions will be reviewed by the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee (PSPRC) on an annual basis determined by the date of hire. New positions or postings will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the PSPRC. All church staff will be notified of their job descriptions and the evaluation procedures.

2. Goal: All identified work groups will be encouraged to solicit additional assistance from within the congregation and community.

Evaluate: The church will request all work groups to submit their goals, objectives, and purpose statements within 60 days of the congregational forum. The Administrative Council will review all the work groups.

3. Goal: To compile a list of training activities/information associated with the identified work groups.

Evaluate: All identified work groups will be required to identify all training activities and/or information available pertinent to their field of responsibility. This information will be submitted to the Administrative Council for approval.

4. Goal: To start fifteen new Bible study groups in the next two years.

Evaluate: The effectiveness of these Bible studies will be demonstrated by:

- a. an increase in church growth because of more people understanding the importance of discipleship.
- b. an increase in member participation in church ministries because of their understanding of where God wants them to become involved.
- c. an increase in Bible study participation, because of a growing congregation that will understand our church's commitment to the biblical teachings of discipleship and Christian fellowship.

The task force offered additional insights and ministry goals for the following areas.

### Pastor-Staff-Parish Relations Committee (PSPRC)

The task force developed job descriptions and evaluation procedures for all current church staff and will continue to administer these guidelines for current and future church staff. All positions have a job description on file and have been agreed upon with each employee. Each employee will have a six-month review to go over the job description to ensure everything is being done to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. Each employee will be given one month's notice to prepare for the review. The PSPRC will meet to go over all evaluations with the person to whom each employee is administratively accountable. The head of the PSPRC and Administrative Council chairperson will then meet with the employee to go over the findings of the review. There will also be a yearly review during which an increase of salary may be discussed. The procedure for this review will be the same. Any problems that arise concerning any employee will be immediately communicated to the employee. If a verbal warning has been issued more than two times, a letter will be written and signed by the employee and the PSPRC chairperson. It will then be kept in the PSPRC employee file.

The PSPRC will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss any improvements that could be made on procedures that are in place. Any concerns that any employee or administrator has can also be addressed at this time.

### Leadership Training

All members of the Administrative Council are required to attend at least two leadership trainings/seminars per year. This will ensure that the leadership continues to grow together, in one accord, and will continue to learn how to improve the ministries they

oversee. All members of the Administrative Council as well as all Sunday school teachers are required to be in a home Bible study group. This will ensure continuing discipleship among all our leaders and teachers. The church does not believe that one can disciple another unless one is being disciplined.

The trainings attended will include, but will not be limited to, those offered through the conference. The leadership will attend trainings that are offered at other churches and are deemed beneficial to the furtherance of the vision God has given Emley's Hill.

Those on the PSPRC, the Board of Trustees, Lay Leadership, and Finance must also be in a home Bible study group. The PSPRC makes important decisions regarding the pastor and employees of the church. The Board of Trustees makes legal decisions concerning church finances and stewardship, and the Committee on Lay Leadership is responsible for nominations of people for various committees and ministries according to their spiritual gifts. Every individual on these committees needs to be constantly growing in their spiritual walk with Christ in order to discern God's will in making necessary decisions required in these positions.

### Member Involvement

The Committee on Lay Leadership has compiled information regarding the Spiritual Gifts of each person in the congregation who wishes to be used by God in various ministries. The information was gathered through the use of the Spiritual Gift Inventory

questionnaires<sup>82</sup> that were given to the congregation, filled out, and returned to the head of the committee. The names and spiritual gifts of each person were then put on a reference list to be used in determining which persons would best be suited for any particular ministry that God raises up.

There are individuals gifted for every ministry to which God continues to call us. The various committees will continue to contact people and ask them to share their specific gifts. All individual ministries will have training for any person who wishes to be involved, in order to keep everybody informed of procedures and guidelines expected to be followed. Each ministry has their own set of guidelines on how to efficiently run things and will continue to make improvements on the basis of the input and suggestions of all those who continue to be involved. The head of each ministry/committee is ultimately accountable to the Administrative Council for any decisions made.

We will produce a brochure titled, "How Can I Become Involved?" which will be available in the Narthex by June 2004; the brochure will identify every ministry in the church and the contact person for each one. This will allow everyone who comes to the church to see what ministries (including home Bible groups) are available to them and how they can become involved if they so choose.

### Bible Studies

The church continues to meet its goals in the number of Bible study groups. The church has new leaders that God continues to raise up, and the number at each Bible study group continues to increase. We will start seven new Bible study groups in 2004 and another

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<sup>82</sup> Appendix A: "New Ideas in Church Vitality and Leadership," *Net Results*, February 1997.

eight in 2005, for a total of twenty Bible study groups. Each group will have a total of ten to fifteen people, depending on the topic of study. The new leaders of the studies will be individuals who are involved in the current groups and have shown signs of spiritual maturity and commitment to Christ. They will be recommended by the pastor or to the pastor by the current leader of their group. The final decision will be at the discretion of the pastor.

All the Bible studies offered deal with different topics at different levels of intensity. There are studies that may be more appropriate for a new Christian, as well as studies for someone who wants to participate in a more in depth study. There are also studies available to assist with marriage and family. The church has four groups that meet in New Egypt. One meets on Monday evening, another on Tuesday evening, a third on Wednesday evening, and the final on Friday evening. There is also a Saturday morning men's group. A monthly leadership Bible study can be attended by anyone in the church who is on a committee or is involved in any type of leadership in the church.

The church will continue to choose a variety of study topics that meet the needs of our growing congregation. Each study will nurture the growth of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through teaching relevant topics that can be applied to the lives of each individual with the presence and help of the Holy Spirit.

#### Facility and Finances Task Force

"The purpose of the Facility and finances task force is

1. to assess the congregation's financial stewardship and its use of the church property and equipment.

2. to analyze the percentage of the budget allocated for staff, Congregational Ministries, Outreach Ministries, debt load, and maintenance.
3. to assess how the facility is being used. (Is it adequate for present needs? Could it be used for other causes? What are the short-term maintenance needs? Costs? Is the facility adequate for increased membership? How much more room will be needed? At what cost?)
4. to identify specific Facility and Finances development needs for the church's programs and recommend appropriate changes."<sup>83</sup>

Prior to the assessment workshop, the task force was asked to prepare a sketch of the floor plan to: determine whether space was an issue for the future, determine whether the facility was adequate for future ministry, and assess repair projects and costs and whether they would be cost effective. Their responses are as follows.

1. Evaluate your church facility and develop a schedule for any needed renovation projects and costs.

At present, there are no maintenance needs or renovation projects that need attention.

2. Prepare a sketch of the floor plan of the church facility and summarize findings and implications of the use of space.

The current facility is at capacity. It is seriously overcrowded at least six times a year. Although we attempted to hold extra services, they were lightly attended. The footprint of the property does not lend itself to expansion or addition. Most importantly, the building is not handicap accessible. The educational wing is at maximum capacity

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<sup>83</sup> Dykema, 63.



with no room for expansion. The rooms are not large enough for the youth group, and there is no room for special programs inside or outside the building. The fellowship hall is too small for full church gatherings and the kitchen is inadequate for large-scale use. There is no storage space, and office space is inadequate. At present, offices are being shared. The only space available for the choir to practice, the sanctuary, is too small and offers limited availability. The parking, too, is limited, with only fifteen parking spaces for more than one hundred cars.

3. Identify current activities and potential future activities for which the church has no or inadequate facilities.

The facility could be used for a day-care program with some minor changes, and the building itself is in very good condition with no maintenance issues at present. The facility is not adequate and does not lend itself to further growth.

4. Complete a financial assessment profile of the church and its membership.

The past ten years have shown an increase in overall ministry budget from \$80,300 in 1994 to \$108,000 in 2003. Expenses have risen in relation to that growth, with a total budget of \$90,600 in 1994 to \$180,000 in 2003. At the same time, membership has risen from 202 in 1994 with a low of 162 in 1996 to 285 in 2003.

A 2003 analysis of giving units in the church shows that of a total of 91 giving units, 9 give zero, 38 give \$500 or less per year, 10 giving units give between \$501 and \$999 per year, 12 units give between \$1000 and \$1999 per year, 7 units give between \$2000 and \$2,999 per year and 15 units give over \$3000 per year. Tithers make up approximately 24% of the giving units, a significant factor in analyzing church health.

The following was presented for the planning workshop.

The purpose of the Facility and Finances task force is to analyze the church's Facility and Finances and draw any conclusions and implications from the findings. Where possible, we drew conclusions, for example, we determined that we had outgrown the facility. In other areas, however (i.e., specific facility needs and development), we believe that we must review the congregational plan in order to make a meaningful judgment.

In assessing the current facility, it was found to be inadequate in size for current use and is inadequate for future growth. The facility is also limited by the site on which it is located. The restrictions of the site preclude any options for expansion to the existing facility. The overall condition of the facility is very good. Several future uses of the facility were discussed. The facility could easily be used as a chapel or for church office space. Future use as preschool was also discussed. This would require extensive research into codes and costs involved. In addition, it might be possible to convert the church to a residence, or some other use, and sell it. This also would require further research and discussion.

We have drawn the following conclusion concerning the existing facility. It is inadequate for growth and/or new programs. The site precludes any expansion or alterations to the building. A new site is necessary if growth (congregational or program) is to take place. The new site should be of sufficient size to allow flexibility for the future (i.e., church parsonage, parking, athletic field, fellowship hall, hobbies and crafts, school, etc.). The task force was unable to draw any conclusions as to specific new facility needs and consequently has drawn no conclusions about development needs. Property acquisition would require no less than \$300,000.

The financial stewardship of the church was also assessed. The church is a combination of a merger between Emley's Hill United Methodist Church and the Clarksburg United Methodist Church. The merger took place in 1989 and established full-time ministry for the first time. Prior to the merger, each church had an annual budget of less than \$10,000 each. The ministries and the budget have grown steadily to the current level of \$108,000 (2003). This has taken place with a corresponding increase in the congregation and annual giving. The church has no debt and no significant maintenance needs. Generally speaking, the budget has always been in a break even position. However, whenever a need has arisen, we have moved forward faithfully, and the need has always been met. Full-time ministry, growing youth program and outreach ministry, the addition to the church, and our Sunday school program have all been evidence that faithfulness is rewarded. Our conclusions are that while our needs have always been met, we need to continue to reach out and expand our boundaries faithfully and prayerfully. We are in the process of considering what specific development goals we need to work with at this point, and when these become available, it will be critical to weigh these in regard to our current congregation and future giving.

#### Vision Task Force

"The purpose of the Vision task force is to prepare two or three vision statements for your church."<sup>84</sup>

The Vision task force was unique among the task forces in that their sole responsibility was to develop a vision statement for the church. In order to accomplish

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 71.

this goal, the task force was asked to review all the data collected by the other task forces and to review all the work done at the assessment workshop. They were also responsible for distributing the “Questionnaire for Setting Future Direction of the Church.”<sup>85</sup>

The Vision task force mailed out “A Questionnaire for Setting the Future Direction of the Church” to the church families. The questions considered several areas of ministries. Regarding church facilities, 76% believed planning for member growth and facility expansion was necessary. Regarding church membership, 72% believed that planning should be done for significant growth in membership. The church’s vision is to build a campus-style worship facility that accommodates 1,000 people in worship. An expanded facility would allow for greater flexibility in providing services to a greater spectrum of people. Expanded youth services and vacation Bible school along with an increase in continuing education events are seen as a positive way to effect change in the community. Included in the facility expansion will be a gymnasium for various sports, exercise classes, and weightlifting. The church also plans to establish a Christian preschool program. Also included in the use of the expanded facilities is space for Outreach Ministries such as auto shop, adult education and trade classes, and ministry leadership training.

The new facility will include an all-purpose room with a kitchen and stage area. This area will be used for the annual Thanksgiving dinner, the annual talent show, various youth group activities, and Christian concerts. The church will be able to sponsor various educational seminars for the congregation and the surrounding community. The facility will also be available to other groups on a rental basis for their functions. The

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 76–77.

facility will have a library comprising books, videos, Christian magazines, and computers with Internet access made available to the congregation and the public.

The church has a very active outreach committee. Of the questionnaire respondents, 72% believed that the church should pursue active ministries to reach the nominally churched and the unchurched. The church will expand its mission outreach locally and worldwide. The church will expand its ministry to needy families by increasing the number of volunteers serving in the food pantry and clothing pantry. The church will support and finance new mission initiatives with the youth through efforts such as our annual Extreme Skateboard Festival. This festival reaches over one thousand young people each year and is held on rented land. This rental agreement is renewed on a yearly basis and is subject to refusal by the owner of the land. A new facility would eliminate this concern.

Regarding the church's finances and operations, 59% believed that members would give more as the church focused on the vision and mission that have been established. Regarding church finances and capital development, 52% believed moderate capital funds could be raised if needed, and 48% believed members would give willingly and generously to this, if needed. The church continues to grow both physically and spiritually. As the church grows, income from tithes and offerings will also increase. The church will trust in God and continue to pray for the wisdom to complete His will concerning this facility expansion, which the church believes will have a dramatic impact on the surrounding community and will help bring people to Christ and to experience His unconditional love.

The Vision task force presented the following vision statement to the congregation and the planning workshop.

“The vision of Emley’s Hill United Methodist Church is to provide and sustain dynamic, passionate worship which restores, renews, and regenerates; to expand our facilities and ministries to have a dramatic impact on the lives in our community by teaching the unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.”

After the planning workshop concluded, the focus committee continued to meet for the purpose of working out and writing down a plan of action. The committee distributed the plan to the congregation. The administrative council then determined a plan of action and a timeline to set in motion all that was decided upon by the task forces. Following are the vision statement, mission statement, core ministry values, and the plans and goals established and agreed upon by the task forces and the congregation.

The vision statement, in its final form, is the same as above with the addition of eleven goals to be accomplished by the year 2005.

1. Have a campus-style worship facility that accommodates 1,000 people.
2. Establish a preschool in our existing building.
3. Start twenty home Bible study groups.
4. Offer six evening/weekend ministry activities that involve the youth that include but are not limited to, skateboarding, basketball, woodworking, machine shop, music, home economics.
5. Provide leadership training.
6. Offer adult education.
7. Fulfill our mission of feeding and clothing the needy in our community.

8. Establish a special needs ministry and offer a bus ministry.
9. Offer a Christian counseling/crisis center.
10. Sponsor and educate missionaries.
11. Have progressive outreach programs that draw the community.

The Mission Statement was the result of much hard work in compressing the ideas and insights garnered over time and led to this statement, “Emley’s Hill United Methodist Church is to help all people experience the unconditional love of Christ.” This statement embodies the reasoning set forth for the expansion of the facilities and the ministries that are now being engaged in and those planned for the future. Those ministries will be guided and must align with the following Core Ministry Values.

We believe:

1. children are important to God and our church.
2. in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19)
3. effective communication and accountability are essential to achieving God’s will.
4. in contemporary worship led by the Holy Spirit.
5. we glorify God by living out His biblical standard of stewardship.
6. in biblical preaching and teaching for life transformation.
7. unconditional love is our primary witness to the world and one another.
8. prayer is foundational.

Every ministry that is established in the future and every ministry now in place must meet the standard of these ministry values. All ministries will be evaluated on the basis of these core values. Those ministries not found to align themselves with these core values will be eliminated no matter how endearing they are or how much history they have in the church. To accomplish the will of God the church must obey what it has determined God has outlined for us to follow.

#### Plans and Goals

The church currently has five Bible study groups. In the year 2004, we will start seven new Bible study groups and another eight in 2005. Each group will consist of ten to twelve people. We will find new families to host a Bible study in their homes through those who are involved in home groups now, and those who will be willing to host a group at their home during a major church-wide Bible study campaign that will kick off in February of 2004. This campaign will include every member of the church. We will train four leaders by June 30, 2004, and another three by December 2004. We will accomplish the same goal for the year 2005.

#### Food and Clothing Pantry

We have met our goal of opening a food and clothing pantry to serve those who have needs in our community. Our grand opening took place on Monday, May 6, 2002. The pantry is located in the old Municipal building on Imlaystown Road in Imlaystown, New Jersey. The township of Upper Freehold has agreed to let us use the building for a cost of fifty dollars per quarter, plus any utility expenses we might incur. They have agreed to



maintain the outside of the building and grounds for us, including grass cutting and snow removal. We have the responsibility of maintaining the building with paint or with anything structural, including securing shelving or putting nails in any walls or floors.

We are receiving food through the Monmouth & Ocean County Food Bank and through donations from the community. The cost of the food from the food bank is fourteen cents a pound, and we are receiving free food from the government twice a month. To track how much food is being distributed in the area, we are requiring each food recipient to sign a form. This system will allow us to have more food allotted to us from the government program, which determines the amount of food allowable by the number of people in need in the community.

We are receiving the clothing through donations from the church and community. The Imlaystown School has graciously offered their services for the sorting of all clothing and will be allowing students to work with us on the days and hours that we are open during the school year. The students will be helping us to organize the clothing and stock the food we receive. The school will be the only drop-off point for any clothing that is donated, either by people in the community, in the church, or the volunteers working at the pantry. This will save us many hours of work, and will also alleviate any problems or hurt feelings that could ensue by turning away clothing that is in less than desirable condition. Any clothing that cannot be used at the pantry will be taken to the Trenton Mission, where it can be used in shelters and for the homeless.

All the food at the pantry is free to any needy family in the community. Each family is allotted the necessary food they need per week, and we continue to determine the amount of food needed to serve the area. We can increase the amount of food per

family when we see how much funding will be generated. We will also provide emergency assistance to any family that is brought to our attention.

The clothing at the pantry is also free at this time because of the fair condition and abundance of the clothing. We will put in place in 2004 a system that will distribute items of clothing in no less than excellent condition, and we will be able to sell them at a very small fee, just enough to offset the cost of the food, building, and utilities. This will enable the ministry to pay for itself. It is now being funded by donations.

The food and clothing pantry is open on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. We will expand the hours as we get the volunteer support necessary. Our goal for the pantry is to reach all the needy families in our surrounding areas. We expect to outgrow this facility within the next two years, at which time we will look to move into another building, one that will serve a larger number of families. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this ministry by determining how many families are being served and the amount of volunteer support and funding we receive.

### Bus Ministry

We have fulfilled the vision of acquiring a bus for a bus ministry.

We will establish an oversight committee by June of 2004. Its purpose is to solicit three volunteer drivers from the congregation with the conditions that they must be able to keep the bus at their home and they must be able to keep up on routine maintenance. The committee will find one volunteer to keep track of major maintenance, licensing and insurance. One volunteer will be found to do routing and scheduling. Routes will be

established by September 2004 along with a budget to cover maintenance, insurance, and fuel. Funding options will also be decided upon by September 2004. Operations will begin on September 2004 to serve children who cannot otherwise get to church.

### Preschool

We will start a preschool in the existing building by December 2005. By June 2004 there will be a committee in place to oversee this project. The State of New Jersey will be contacted for specifications on proper code compliance, and an existing Christian preschool will be contacted and offered the option of running a preschool from our facility. The facility will be brought up to code as necessary.

### Skateboard Ministry

We will start a skateboard ministry as a direct result of the X-treme Fest Outreach Event we sponsored at the New Egypt High School in August of 2003. We have a budget already in place and have acquired the proper insurance for this specialized ministry. We will purchase a warehouse-type building to accommodate this ministry by July 2004; until then, we will run this ministry in the parking lot of the community building in New Egypt. This ministry will take place once a week on Saturdays, from 12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m. During that time, any child who attends will receive lunch provided from a concession wagon already owned by the church. At present, we have received a \$4,000 grant from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to help support the ministry, and we will continue to utilize fund raisers within the church and throughout the community.

### Alpha Ministry

We have fulfilled our vision of starting an Alpha Ministry. The first Alpha program kicked off in September of 2003 and concluded in December of 2003. Of the thirty-five people who attended, more than half made commitments to Christ and requested membership in the church. We will begin a second program in April of 2004, after the church-wide Bible study (forty days of purpose) is completed. We will reach out to the community in a more significant way through advertising efforts and will have no fewer than thirty people in attendance. We will increase volunteer support for the second program by involving veterans of the first program. We will have one person in charge of coordinating meals and one person in charge of coordinating the setup and cleanup.

The Alpha ministry is a fifteen-session practical introduction to the Christian faith designed primarily for the unchurched and new Christians. Alpha is a dynamic and effective way of presenting the Gospel in a clear and nonthreatening manner. The primary goal of Alpha is to reach the unchurched; however, the ministry also refreshes the faith and strengthens the foundation of any Christian because it provides an opportunity to evangelize and exercise Christian leadership.

Each session involves an informal meal, a talk given by the pastor, or a video presentation, followed by a small group discussion over coffee. The topics of the discussion are as follows.

Christianity: boring, untrue, and irrelevant? Who is Jesus? Why did He die? How can I be sure of my faith? Why and how should I read the Bible? Why and how should I

pray? How does God guide us? Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do?

How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

How can I resist evil? Why and how should I tell others? Does God heal today? What about the church?

The small group discussions that follow the teaching will be the most valuable and rewarding times of the Alpha ministry. These sessions offer opportunities for questions to be asked and opinions to be expressed about the topic of the evening. They also provide the chance for friendships to develop in a relaxed and nonthreatening environment.

The Alpha process is well adapted to meet the needs of the unchurched. It incorporates all three of the most prevalent concepts in the church today: the notion of the Lord's Supper (sharing a meal together in community), the concept of the seeker service (it is the gospel message repackaged in a culturally acceptable way), and the cell and celebration approach (it uses small groups and a communal message to excite and educate). This process will bring the unchurched to the saving grace of Jesus Christ, build relationships, and draw the participants of this ministry into the community of faith.

#### Christian Counseling/Crisis Center

We have fulfilled the vision of starting a counseling/crisis center. In May of 2002, The Reverend Dr. Ed Conway was hired as an associate pastor. Dr. Conway brings thirty years of counseling experience to the ministry and has implemented "Meta-Therapy Ministries" at Emley's Hill Church. The services are offered to the community on a sliding fee scale.

### Special Needs Ministry

In September 2004, we will start classes for children with emotional and learning disabilities. We will have two teachers in place to help in the classes these children attend. The classes will pair our special needs children with nondisabled peers. The classes will meet each Sunday at the 9:30 a.m. service. We will have in place a curriculum specifically designed for these children that will end when the children make their Confirmation, at which time another curriculum will be implemented. This curriculum will easily blend with the regular Sunday school curriculum now being used. We will have in place in the counseling center a parent support group that will meet once a month for a time of sharing and prayer. Child care will be provided. We will start a handicap ministry that will deal with physically challenged children by September 2005, by which time we expect to have a building that will allow handicap access to the Sunday school rooms.

### Capital Campaign

The church has met with Kirby Smith Inc. to develop a capital campaign. A committee has been formed and will meet by the end of January 2004. We will locate a building to use for the ministries and worship until the new church can be built, and we will locate property, develop general building plans, and start the capital campaign by May 2004. An architect and construction company has already been retained and we will develop detailed specifications by July 2004. We will develop a budget and secure financing by August of 2004. The Capital Campaign should be completed by November 2004, and we will attain site plan approval, with ground breaking to take place by December 2005.

### Youth Ministry

Acknowledging that children are important to God and that all should receive the Kingdom of God as little children, our ministry to children and youth is the central focus of the vision for the future of the church. The youth ministry relates to children in sixth through twelfth grades and encompasses many areas of discipleship for these young people. The youth ministry will be consistent with the vision for the church and will engage in all other ministries of the church. All decisions and actions will be based on ministering to each individual child's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. The focus areas for youth ministry will be to increase to 100% by 2004 the percentage of congregational children participating in the group. We will accomplish this by personally acknowledging and inviting each child to every meeting and event. Each participant in the group will be asked to choose other children within the congregation and encourage them to attend youth activities. Although we are limited by our current facilities, we believe God has called us to a greater ministry to these young people and will provide the facilities as the numbers warrant it.

We will form a youth advisory council by June 2004 comprising at least one male and one female student for junior high youth as well as senior high youth. The council will also be attended by the youth pastor, when hired, and will meet on a regular basis to evaluate the youth ministry and recommendations for current and future needs, including budgeting and fund raising. The council members will coordinate and schedule all youth events and plan special events and projects. They will provide support and encouragement for each other and assist the pastor in planning Confirmation mentoring.

They also will assist the pastor in advertising, reviewing applications, and interviewing prospective youth pastors.

We will hire a part-time youth pastor with musical abilities by September 2004 to work in conjunction with the pastor and the youth advisory council to expand and enhance the current youth ministry, which will include the following: nurture and strengthen each child's faith journey; meet with junior high and senior high groups at least twice monthly for Bible study, worship, fellowship, and prayer; plan for at least one retreat and one mission trip annually; and encourage participation in worship and the use of talents to serve God and others through instrumental, vocal, and theatrical ministries. This includes assembling a youth instrumental band, vocal choir, and theater group by December 2004. We will offer community service opportunities through volunteering at the food pantry, visiting hospitals, prisons, senior living facilities, serving meals at soup kitchens, organizing automotive and minor home repairs. An athletic program will be implemented along with a youth-oriented community outreach event such as a concert, a seminar, or a meeting with a special guest. Each summer there will be an opportunity provided for a summer camp experience. We will develop a latchkey program for at-risk youth and assist the youth pastor in counseling and advising youth.

We have met our goal with starting an instrumental and vocal team that involves the youth of our church in leading the congregation in praise and worship. This team consists of adults and the youth that are in sixth grade and up. We believe that by the time they have reached this age, they have the foundation necessary to start being involved in this type of ministry. All persons involved must be members or regular attendees of the church or the youth group. Anybody wishing to be involved in this ministry will attend a



mandatory, four-week training session led by the pastor. This training will enable those involved to understand the importance of praise and worship in the church. It will also help each person discern God's call in his or her life for worship ministry. The leader of the team is required to be in a home fellowship group and will meet on a monthly basis with the pastor and the administrative council chairperson to discuss any issues concerning ministry.

The team will meet every Thursday night from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. to practice the songs for Sunday worship. The practice will start and end with prayer. All team members who wish to participate at Sunday worship must be at practice unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the team leader. The instrumental portion of the team will continue to grow as gifted people present themselves. We currently have a pianist, a drummer, and a saxophone player. We will update the current overhead projector to a computer-operated Power Point system by June 2004. This will enable us to enhance the worship by more efficiently projecting the lyrics and will allow us to add backgrounds.

The younger children from our Sunday school will put on special performances throughout the year. We will also arrange throughout the year for visits from special artists who will join our team for special performances approved by the pastor and Church Council.

#### Sunday School Program

At this time seventy children are registered in our Sunday school program. Our goal is to have over one hundred children attending each week starting September 2005. We will also have a minimum of fifteen teachers so that we will be able to have coteachers

available. By December 2005 five computers will be installed in the classrooms for youth Bible studies and special curriculum. We will incorporate the special needs ministry into our Sunday school curriculum and classrooms.

We have met our goals in splitting the Sunday school into two areas of operation as we have continued to grow. We now have a Sunday school superintendent and a youth director. The Sunday school superintendent is responsible for choosing and ordering curriculum for up to fifth grade. The superintendent is also responsible for meeting with the specific teachers of those classes. The superintendent organizes and implements the annual first Holy Communion classes each spring under the direction of the senior pastor. The superintendent is also involved in any special services in which the Sunday school children are involved.

The youth director is responsible for choosing and ordering the curriculum for sixth grade and up. She is also responsible to meet with teachers of those students on a regular basis to discuss the status of each class and how the curriculum is being received in the class. The youth director organizes and implements the annual Confirmation Mentoring curriculum under the direction of the senior pastor and is directly involved with all youth group activities. All curriculum used should be relevant to the lives of today's youth. They will be taught the Word of God and how to apply it in dealing with temptation, sin, and peer pressure.

Our VBS program continues to be the largest one in our surrounding area. Each year we have a minimum of one hundred children and youth involved on a daily basis throughout the week. Our largest VBS turnout consisted of over two hundred children and volunteers. We expand the amount of space necessary by renting tents and portable

restrooms and utilizing our parking lot in order to serve a full lunch to every child. Our VBS runs Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We have a celebration party on Friday evening that relates to the VBS theme, and we invite the families of all the children who attended for the week. As our VBS continues to grow, we continue to look into other avenues of possible locations so we can accommodate every family who wishes to attend. We plan to be in a building large enough to accommodate well over two hundred children by the year 2005.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this journey of renewal has been the unifying quality of the process. All change leading to renewal causes some level of concern. Concern usually rises out of a lack of information that would answer the questions that give rise to the concern. Historically, Emley's Hill had never engaged in an organized effort to evaluate its ministry or its community needs to see where God was calling them to minister. The status quo was always to remain autonomous from the part-time pastors, who were stymied in their attempts at renewal. Power had always resided in the few families who ran the church. *Focus Your Ministry* provides a methodology that "equips the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."<sup>86</sup> In other words, it provides a set of tools for renewal that involves the whole church in the process and thereby creates unity. This does not mean that everyone agrees with everything done. What it does mean is that the process of unification by setting people on the road to self-discovery is ignited. In the process the questions of who are we and where are we going are answered and God begins to take control. Jesus said, "I will build my Church."<sup>87</sup> All

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<sup>86</sup> Eph. 4:12 (NIV).

<sup>87</sup> Matt. 16:18 (NIV).

God asks is that we as a people follow Him. *Focus Your Ministry* provides the means to gather the information necessary to enable the church to, in the end, evaluate their current setting and the ministry possibilities to which God is calling them.

*Focus Your Ministry* provides the tools to evaluate the level of commitment within the congregation to the call of Christ, which is critical to accomplish meaningful ministry. The ministry must enable every member to be involved at some level in order to overcome the tendency of individuals to become complacent when not involved.

Discipleship is the key to Christian maturity. Knowing where people are spiritually helps in establishing a meaningful program of discipleship. Ongoing Christian maturity is the key to renewal. Renewal begins when we begin to understand the things that break the heart of God, when we seek forgiveness for our prideful ownership of the ministry that belongs to God, when we draw closer to God's Word, when we develop a passion for souls, when we fully depend on God, when we understand who we are in Christ, and when we finally come to the conclusion that we are called to serve and not be served; then and only then will renewal take place. The author is grateful for the evaluative tools provided in *Focus Your Ministry*, which helped in bringing about renewal to a rural United Methodist Church.

APPENDIX A:

*SPIRITUAL GIFTS*

*INVENTORY*

## Spiritual Gifts Inventory

The Bible tells us that every believer is given a spiritual gift for the purpose of building up God's Church (1 Corinthians 12:7). This is exciting news! God has given each of us a special gift.

As disciples our responsibility is to discern, experiment with, and use our spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are special abilities, talents, or yearnings that God gives to every disciple, for the purpose of building up the Church.

This spiritual gifts inventory will help you *begin* to discover what your spiritual gifts might be. Use the information this inventory yields to discern more clearly God's will for your ministry in life.

**This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Each statement has three possible responses. As you read each statement, reflect for a moment as to how it describes *you*, and then write Y, S, or N beside the item to indicate one of these three responses.**

Yes—I have *positive* feelings/*much* enjoyment

Sometimes—I have *neutral* feelings/*modest* enjoyment

No—I have *negative* feelings/*no* enjoyment, or DOES

NOT APPLY

### EXAMPLE:

\_\_\_\_ When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful.

If this describes you well, write Y in the blank.

If this is only partly true about you, write S in the blank.

If this does not describe you at all, write N in the blank.

### Answer

\_\_\_\_ 1. I am able to organize ideas, things, time, and people for more effective results.

\_\_\_\_ 2. I receive much joy from working with my hands on various arts and crafts.

\_\_\_\_ 3. I find that my skills in building or repairing objects benefit others.

\_\_\_\_ 4. I like sharing with other people how God has changed my life.

\_\_\_\_ 5. I am able to share words of encouragement with those who are struggling in life.

\_\_\_\_ 6. There have been times when I have felt sure I knew God's specific will for the future, even when others have not been so sure.

\_\_\_\_ 7. I am so confident that God will meet my needs that I give to him sacrificially and consistently.

\_\_\_\_ 8. I find joy in being a help to someone who can utilize my help and

concern.

\_\_\_\_ 9. My home is always open to people passing through who need a place to stay.

\_\_\_\_ 10. When I am asked to pray for others, I feel that my prayers will have tangible results.

\_\_\_\_ 11. Oftentimes, I am able to perceive what is in the heart or mind of another person without his or her telling me.

\_\_\_\_ 12. I am able to motivate people to get things done.

\_\_\_\_ 13. I enjoy doing things to comfort people during sickness or times of problems and/or anxiety.

\_\_\_\_ 14. When I am singing, I feel a great sense of joy.

\_\_\_\_ 15. I would enjoy being involved in an instrumental music presentation.

\_\_\_\_ 16. I appreciate being called on to do things for other people.

\_\_\_\_ 17. I have enjoyed relating to a certain group of people over a long period of time, sharing personally in their successes and failures.

\_\_\_\_ 18. I feel that I can communicate biblical truths to others so that they are helped.

\_\_\_\_ 19. When important decisions need to be made, I sense a confidence in God's guidance.

\_\_\_\_ 20. When I use my ability to write, I know others will learn and grow from it.

\_\_\_\_ 21. I am able to plan and administer programs that will be of benefit to others.

\_\_\_\_ 22. I enjoy the times that I am able to create beautiful items with my hands.

\_\_\_\_ 23. I enjoy the work necessary for gardening, landscaping, and other projects.

\_\_\_\_ 24. I feel comfortable telling others how God has changed my life.

## Spiritual Gifts Inventories

\_\_\_25. I am able to talk with and build up those who are having difficulties in life, whether they are in despair, sorrow, or not sure of themselves.

\_\_\_26. When in a group, I am the one others often look to for vision and direction.

\_\_\_27. I am ready to forego certain privileges in order to give money to God's work.

\_\_\_28. When I serve the Lord, I really don't care who gets the credit.

\_\_\_29. I enjoy inviting visitors and guests (*strangers*) home to dinner after Sunday morning worship.

\_\_\_30. I take prayer requests very seriously and pray until the answer comes.

\_\_\_31. I have the ability to discover new truths for myself through reading or observing the situation firsthand.

\_\_\_32. I am able to lead small and/or large groups of people into making decisions.

\_\_\_33. I enjoy helping and working with those people who are ignored by others.

\_\_\_34. In the area of vocal music, I enjoy performing alone and/or in a group of singers.

\_\_\_35. I am able to play a musical instrument effectively.

\_\_\_36. When other people ask me to lend a helping hand, I feel special.

\_\_\_37. I feel comfortable in leading a small group in Bible study.

\_\_\_38. I find it rewarding to teach people more about the Lord.

\_\_\_39. When a person has a problem, as a Christian I can frequently see what is best to do.

\_\_\_40. I find pleasure in composing and writing paragraphs and stories for the growth of others.

\_\_\_41. I can easily delegate important responsibilities to other people.

\_\_\_42. I find joy in having a beautiful lawn, flowers, and shrubs that are properly placed and maintained.

\_\_\_43. The repair and maintenance of things comes easily to me.

\_\_\_44. It is easy for me to talk to other people about life and/or spiritual matters.

\_\_\_45. I am able to speak words of encouragement to those who are troubled, discouraged, or not sure of themselves.

\_\_\_46. I am able to trust in the reliability of God when all else looks dim.

\_\_\_47. I am content to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work financially.

\_\_\_48. When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful.

\_\_\_49. I am able to provide food and/or lodging graciously and willingly to people who are in need.

\_\_\_50. I find myself praying when I could be doing other things.

\_\_\_51. Through study or experience, I have been able to discern the wisest course of action to take in major decisions.

\_\_\_52. When a group I am in is lacking organization, I tend to step in to fill the gap.

\_\_\_53. Sometimes when I help people out, I know they may not even say "thank you," but I still enjoy helping them.

\_\_\_54. I enjoy singing familiar gospel songs with a group of fellow Christians.

\_\_\_55. I know that my ability to perform instrumental music has been a blessing to others.

\_\_\_56. I respond cheerfully when asked to do a job, even if it seems menial.

\_\_\_57. I enjoy leading small groups of people, especially when I am able to show genuine care and concern for them.

\_\_\_58. I enjoy helping others learn things about Scripture that aid in building them up.

\_\_\_59. I can intuitively arrive at solutions to fairly complicated problems.

\_\_\_60. I am able to put my thoughts and ideas into positive, written form.

\_\_\_61. I am able to set goals and objec-

tives, and then make plans to reach them.

\_\_\_62. I find joy in painting pictures or in making handcrafted objects.

\_\_\_63. I find joy in lawn care and other outside maintenance.

\_\_\_64. When I share my faith with others, I see positive results in their lives.

\_\_\_65. I often share words of comfort, cheer, or encouragement with others.

\_\_\_66. I really believe that God will not let me down, even though everything around me seems to be falling apart.

\_\_\_67. I really enjoy giving my time and treasures to God's work.

\_\_\_68. I am able to assist key leaders to relieve them of detail work, so they can get back to their main jobs.

\_\_\_69. When people visit me at home, I am confident they feel good about being there.

\_\_\_70. I regard prayer as one of my favorite spiritual exercises.

\_\_\_71. I am able to pick up on important biblical truths that benefit me and others.

\_\_\_72. People look to me as a leader when things need to be done.

\_\_\_73. I enjoy working with those less fortunate than I.

\_\_\_74. I am able to lead others in singing.

\_\_\_75. I enjoy using my instrumental music talents for the appreciation of my friends and to the glory of God.

\_\_\_76. I enjoy being a follower more than a leader.

\_\_\_77. I have brought back to faith friends or relatives who have strayed away.

\_\_\_78. I enjoy teaching children or adults about God's love.

\_\_\_79. If one of my friends is faced with a problem, I am able to sort out what God's will is for him or her.

\_\_\_80. I enjoy writing words that will be of benefit to those who read them.

# Spiritual Gifts Inventories

## Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

This inventory has given you a tentative evaluation of your gifts. This is a guideline for you to follow when you experiment with the gifts and determine what specific gifts the Lord has blessed you with.

Values of Answers				Total	Gift
1	21	41	61	_____	Administration
2	22	42	62	_____	Craftsmanship ( <i>Arts/Crafts</i> )
3	23	43	63	_____	Craftsmanship ( <i>Manual</i> )
4	24	44	64	_____	Evangelism
5	25	45	65	_____	Exhortation
6	26	46	66	_____	Faith
7	27	47	67	_____	Giving
8	28	48	68	_____	Helps
9	29	49	69	_____	Hospitality
10	30	50	70	_____	Prayer
11	31	51	71	_____	Knowledge
12	32	52	72	_____	Leadership
13	33	53	73	_____	Mercy
14	34	54	74	_____	Music ( <i>Vocal</i> )
15	35	55	75	_____	Music ( <i>Instrumental</i> )
16	36	56	76	_____	Serving
17	37	57	77	_____	Shepherding
18	38	58	78	_____	Teaching
19	39	59	79	_____	Wisdom
20	40	60	80	_____	Writing

### Discovering Your Spiritual Gift Cluster

The six highest scores reflect your unique set of gifts.

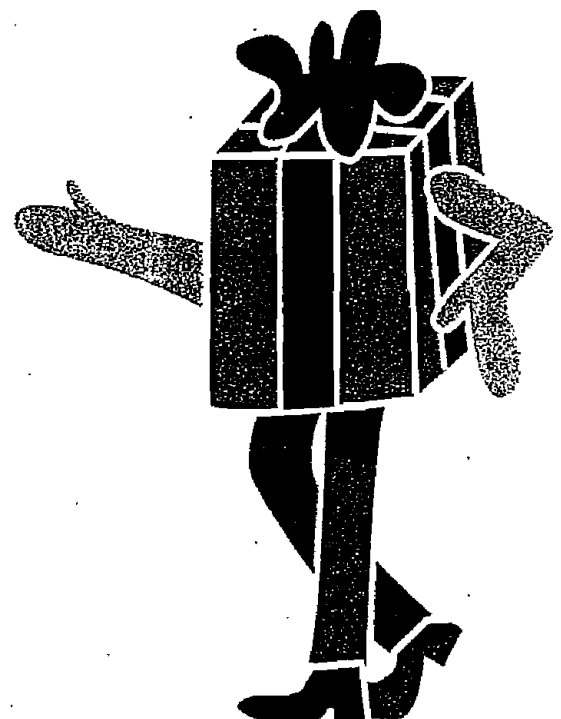
*Gift Cluster* *Point Total*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





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